Will and Julia

A Kehoe Family Story

William F. Kehoe

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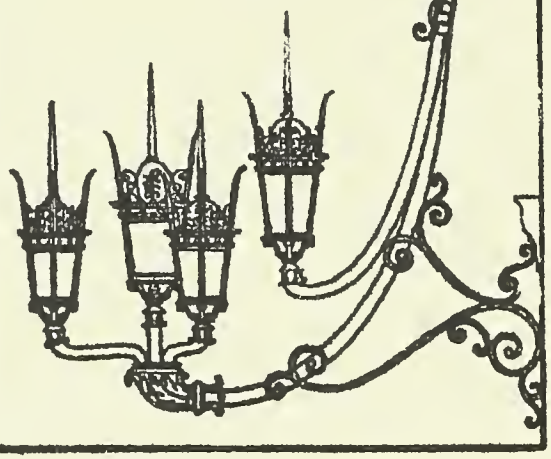

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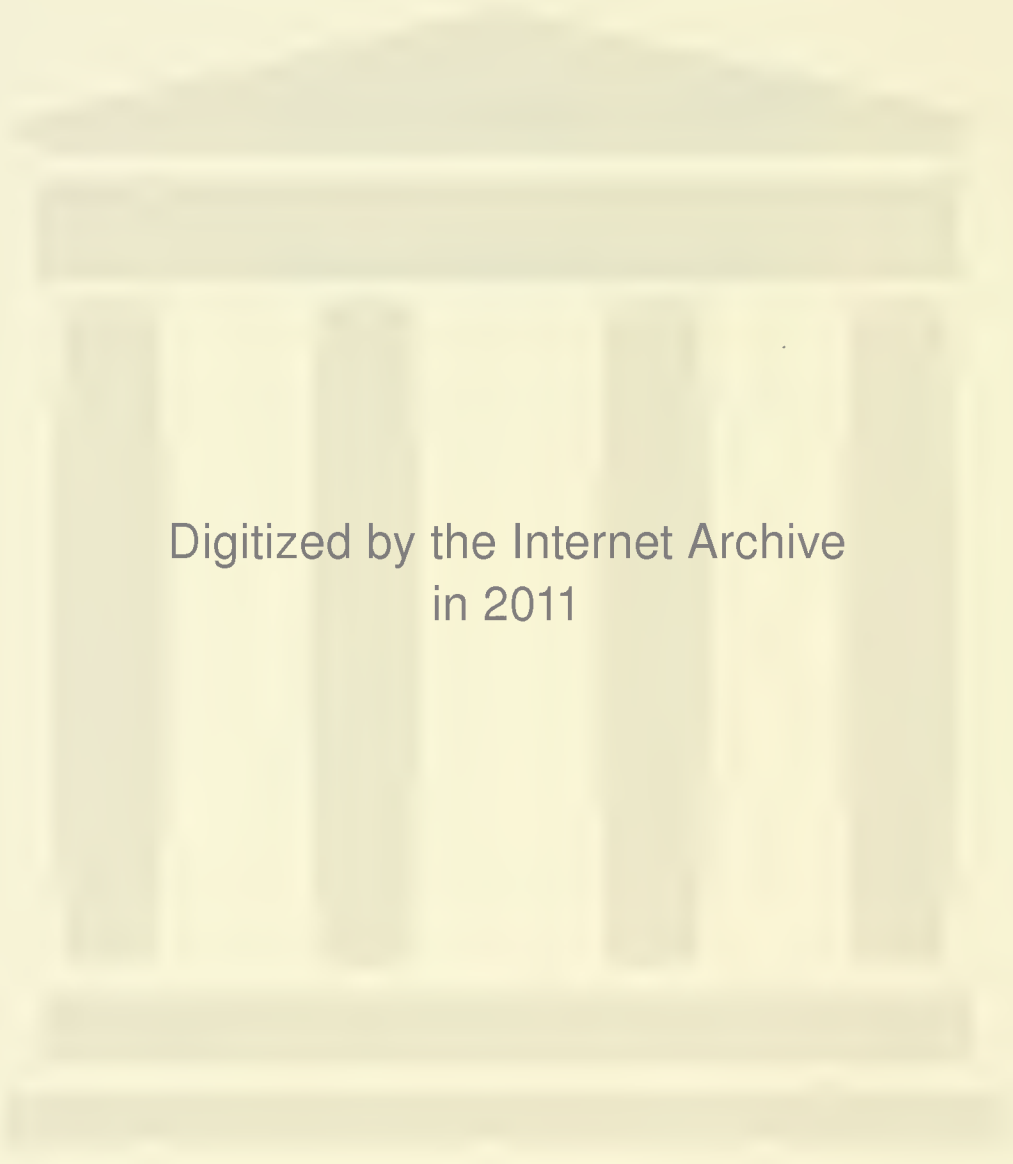
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Will and Julia

A Kehoe Family Story

William F. Kehoe

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For my father, William A. Kehoe,

and my grandfather, William P. Kehoe

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To the reference staff of the Boston Athenaeum for helping with various points of historical research.

To Maureen and Willie Butler for showing me Kehoe's Inch and the Kehoe family homestead in Drumderry.

W. F. K.

I have ever had pleasure in obtaining any little anecdotes of my ancestors.

Benjamin Franklin

People will not look forward to posterity who never look backward to their ancestors.

Edmund Burke

Contents

Chapter 1	How This Story Came To Be Written	1
Chapter 2	The Name of Kehoe	6
Chapter 3	Where the Kehoes Came From	14
Chapter 4	Going to America	39
Chapter 5	Life in the North End	53
Chapter 6	Will and Julia: Courtship and Marriage	74
Chapter 7	Will and Julia: Raising a Family	95
Chapter 8	Summing Up	129

Appendices

Chart A — Ancestors and Siblings of William P. Kehoe 138

Chart B — Ancestors and Siblings of Julia V. Kehoe 139

Chart C — Descendants of William P. and Julia V. Kehoe. 140

Records Consulted 141

Bibliography 144

About the Author 151

Illustrations

The Battle of Vinegar Hill, 1798 5

Jack Kehoe, King of the Molly Maguires 11

Captain Myles W. Keogh 11

Map of Ireland showing Bunclody in County Wexford 15

Kilbranish townland at the foot of Mount Leinster 17

"The Maid of Bunclody" 17

Bunclody a century ago 20

Bunclody today 20

Kehoe's Pub, Bunclody 21

F.C.J. convent and school, Bunclody 22

Katy Kehoe outside the convent school attended during the 1870s by her great-great-aunt, Katy Kehoe 22

Mount Leinster 23

Road sign at Corrabut Gap 23

Map showing Kehoe's Inch and the town of Newtownbarry (now Bunclody) 27

Map of Drumderry townland 28

Living quarters of the Kehoe homestead 30

Dairy, turnip house, and cow house of the Kehoe homestead 30

Looking up Drumderry Hill from the Kehoe homestead 31

Kehoe's Inch on the River Slaney 31

Kehoe gravestone in the graveyard at St. Lazerian's Church, Kildavin, County Carlow 32

The author in Kilbranish with Kehoe third cousins Maureen Butler and Jimmy Kirwan 33

1798 memorial plaque on the bridge in Bunclody over the River Slaney 37

Certificate of Thomas Kehoe's baptism in 1839 42

Thomas Kehoe's prayer book 42

Thomas and Johanna Kehoe shortly after their arrival in America 43

Market Square, Bunclody, in the early part of the present century 46

Irish emigrants leaving Queenstown (now Cobh) Harbor 50

Certificate of Thomas Kehoe's naturalization in 1867 56

Deed of cemetery lot purchased by Thomas Kehoe in 1868 . . . 58

Thomas Kehoe's poll tax bill for the year 1870 59

Grave of Thomas and Johanna Kehoe 59

St. Mary's Church, North End, Boston 62

Certificate of Andrew Kehoe's naturalization in 1883 64

Will's sister, Katherine Kehoe Nolan 66

Petition for administration of the estate of Andy Kehoe's son, Andrew J. Kehoe 69

Grave of Will's father, Andrew Kehoe 70

Grave of Will's sister, Katherine Kehoe Nolan 70

Will Kehoe as a sailor in the U.S. Navy 76

Navy enlistment record of William P. Kehoe 76

U.S.S. Kearsarge sinking the Confederate raider Alabama. 78

Will's photograph of the U.S.S. Kearsarge 80

Certificate of Will's birth in 1867 in Bunclody. 83

Certificate of Julia's birth in 1869 in Boston 84

Will and Julia Kehoe at the time of their marriage in 1898 . . . 92

Certificate of Will and Julia's marriage 94

St. Francis de Sales Church, Charlestown. 96

St. Francis de Sales School, Charlestown 96

Where the Kehoes lived at 24 Mystic Street, Charlestown 99

Will's poll tax bill for the year 1900 99

Will Kehoe and fellow firemen outside firehouse on Salem Street, North End, Boston, during the early 1900s 104

Copy of Paul Kendricken's Memoirs inscribed to Will Kehoe 110

Will's friend, Paul H. Kendricken. 111

Frederick L. Kehoe 114

Arthur T. Kehoe 114

William A. Kehoe 115

William A. Kehoe in the United Fruit Company office, Boston, during the 1920s. 115

Will and Julia's daughters: Alice and Kathryn 116

Will and Julia's sons: Fred, Bill, and Arthur 116

Will and Julia in the 1920s 117

Alice Kehoe and Kathryn Kehoe 117

The summer cottage that Will built on "Vinegar Hill", East Malden, Massachusetts 119

Will's Boston Fire Department employment record 122

Will's driver's license, 1929 122

Petition for administration of Julia's estate, 1940 126

Will and Julia's grave 128

The Kehoe family on the occasion of Fred's wedding on June 17, 1931 134

Bill Kehoe and his wife, Josephine 135

Fred Kehoe and his wife, Adeline 135

Will and Julia's granddaughters 136

Will and Julia's grandsons 137

Will and Julia

A Kehoe Family Story

Chapter 1

How This Story Came to Be Written

I have no memory of my grandfather, Will Kehoe, who died when I was one year old. I have some memory of my grandmother, Julia Kehoe, who died when I was six years old. I remember going at Christmas with my parents when I was five or six to the house in Somerville where Julia lived in her later years with her daughters Alice and Kathryn. I see Julia as a kindly white-haired old lady in a wheelchair.

Growing up, I knew that the Kehoes originally came from a place in Ireland called Wexford. That was about all I knew on the subject of the family's origins. My father, Bill Kehoe, used to refer to the hillside in East Malden where his family had a summer cottage as "Vinegar Hill." I didn't know at the time that this harked back to a famous and bitter

episode in Wexford history which had occurred in the year 1798: i.e., the last stand of the Irish rebels who were slaughtered by overwhelming British forces on a hill outside the town of Enniscorthy which is called Vinegar Hill. For that matter, I think that my father, who was born and lived all his life in the United States, was equally unaware of the historical significance of the name "Vinegar Hill"; for him, it was simply a nickname that was traditionally used in his family to refer to a hill or a place on a hill, usually in a jocular or deprecating way. Similarly, my father sometimes mentioned "Kehoe's Inch," the name by which his family traditionally called the farm where Will Kehoe's people had lived in the old country. We both took "inch" in its English sense as a joking reference to a very small, poor piece of land. Only later when I went to Ireland did I learn that the word "inch" (from the Gaelic) means a field or meadow near a river.

During the 1930s and 1940s, in my family we thought of ourselves as being American, but also as being Catholic and Irish. That meant that we shared the traditional Irish distrust and dislike of the English, who in centuries past had oppressed and persecuted the Catholics in Ireland. My father's cousin, Mary Nolan, refused to buy socks or sweaters made with English woolens. We bitterly resented our American tax dollars being used for Lend Lease and Marshall

Plan aid to England during and immediately after the Second World War. I can remember writing a number of vitriolic anti-English diatribes as essays for my English class at Medford High School in the late 1940s. Of course, none of us below the generation of my grandparents had ever been to Ireland or met a live Englishman.

At the same time, our family had no contact with any relatives in Ireland. Neither Julia nor Will appears to have written to anyone or heard from anyone in the old country. All of their social contacts were with friends and relatives here in the United States. The same was certainly true of my father and his brothers and sisters, none of whom ever gave any indication of knowing the name or the identity of any relatives in Ireland. The only exception was my father's cousin, Mary Nolan, who knew the names of some relations in Ireland and who corresponded with them occasionally.

It was Mary Nolan who first sparked my interest in the family history. During the 1950s Mary sent me two documents out of the past. One was an old black-and-white photograph of a street with a row of houses and stores in a town called Newtownbarry in County Wexford. Mary had marked one of the buildings as being a "bakery and general store" (with living quarters upstairs) which her grandfather and my great-grandfather, Andrew Kehoe, had operated before he

emigrated to America. This gave me for the first time a real sense of an actual place in a far-off country where an actual person in my family had lived a long time before. The other document Mary sent me was a prayer card which indicated that Andrew Kehoe's mother, Catherine Kehoe, had died in a part of Newtownbarry called Drumderry in the year 1879 at the age of seventy-six. Here was another real person, someone whose name I had never heard before, who took me back four generations and one hundred fifty years into the past.

After that I started collecting and writing down recollections about the family history, chiefly from my aunts, Alice and Kathryn Kehoe, as well as from Mary Nolan and my mother, both of whom had memories of Will and Julia Kehoe. When Alice Kehoe, the last survivor of Will and Julia's children, died in 1975, we found a large collection of family documents and photographs which Julia and her daughters had kept in an old wooden chest in their attic for many years. The wooden chest was a homemade one with the name "T. Kehoe" chiseled on the front; it turned out to be the chest in which Julia's father, Thomas Kehoe, had brought his family's belongings when they came to America in 1864. This discovery in the attic restimulated my interest in the family history. It also led me to research various public records, both in this country and in Ireland, in order to fill in some of the gaps in

the story. In the case of one missing brother of Will's, the trail led me eventually to Chicago.

For several reasons this memoir focuses on Will and Julia. *First*, because we are fortunate in having a wealth of surviving materials and information about them. *Second*, because they were interesting individuals in their own right. *Third*, because Will and Julia provide us with a convenient vantage point from which to look back in time several generations before them and to look forward in time several generations after them. The resulting story spans eight generations and more than two hundred years.

The Battle of Vinegar Hill, 1798.
19th century illustration by George Cruikshank.

Chapter 2

The Name of Kehoe

Somebody once asked me if the name *Kehoe* was Hawaiian—perhaps because of all the vowels in it. However, the fact is that *Kehoe* is definitely and quintessentially an Irish name. It is an anglicized form of the Gaelic name *Mac Eochaidh*, meaning "son of *Eochaidh*," a personal name derived from *each*, the Gaelic word for "horse." So in Irish *Kehoe* means something like "horseman" or "jockey."

The name *Kehoe* happens to be doubly important in this story because it was both Will's name and Julia's name. That is, Julia's maiden name, as well as her married name, was *Kehoe*.

The three main spellings of the name are *Kehoe*, *Keogh*, and *Keough*. Sometimes the name occurs with the "Mac" prefix, as in *MacKehoe* or *MacKeogh*. Variant spellings

include *Keo*, *K'Eogh*, *Keho*, *Keyo*, and *Keyhoe*. Some different but related Irish names are *O'Hoey*, *Hoy*, *Haughey*, and *Keohane*.

Our family's Wexford spelling of the name (*Kehoe*) is pronounced the same way as the other two main spellings (*Keogh* and *Keough*): that is, "KEE-OH," with the "h" being silent. This point needs to be persistently impressed upon schoolteachers, government bureaucrats, and other literalists who insist upon pronouncing the name the way it looks in writing ("KEY-HOE"). They should be told, as my father was fond of saying, "The *aitch* in Kehoe is silent, like the *pee* in swimming." Or more elegantly, that the name Kehoe is from the Gaelic, where an "h" is customarily not pronounced. Or simply, "It's pronounced the same way as the Keogh Plan."

With regard to where the accent falls, the name *Kehoe* is not pronounced the same way in Ireland as it is in the United States. In this country, we put the accent on the first syllable: "KEE-oh." In Ireland, the emphasis is strongly on the second syllable: "kee-OH." Often the Irish minimize the first syllable to the point where the name comes out sounding something like "k-YOH." When I first lived in Dublin, people couldn't understand my last name because I was pronouncing it the American way. Then I'd write it down for them and they'd say, "Oh, you mean k-YOH!"

In ancient times, there were branches (or septs) of the Kehoe family in three different parts of Ireland. The most important of these three septs were the McKeoghs of Leinster, the southeastern province of Ireland, who originated in the north of County Kildare and migrated in medieval times into County Wicklow and later into County Wexford. The Leinster Keoghs were hereditary bards or poets, a position of great importance in ancient times. One Maolmuire MacKeogh is recorded as having been the chief professor of poetry in Leinster in the year 1534. The bard was a skilled professional who occupied a respected and well-paid position in the old Gaelic society. He was both a composer and a performer (in modern parlance, a singer/songwriter). To his own accompaniment on the harp, he would perform poems of his own composition before an audience of noblemen who employed him; in addition, a bard would perform traditional Gaelic poetry, of which he had tens of thousands of lines committed to memory. The bards composed poems to celebrate particular occasions, such as a wedding or a noble patron's victory in battle. They composed love songs and laments, poems of praise, and curses which they directed at their enemies. In ancient Ireland, a bard's curse was feared and dreaded as literally having the power to kill the person at whom it was directed. With the establishment of the English

Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland, the bards were dispossessed along with the Gaelic nobility who had been their clients and patrons. What has survived from the bardic tradition among the Irish people in subsequent centuries has been an interest in words, a respect for learning, a love of song, and an impressive verbal facility.

In Ireland today, the name *Kehoe* in its various forms is fairly common. It just misses being included in the one hundred most numerous names in Ireland. Place names include *Keoghville*, County Roscommon, and *Ballymackeogh*, County Tipperary.

Noted Kehoes in Irish history include ***John Keogh*** (1740-1817), a Dublin merchant who was an early leader in the movement for Catholic emancipation, and ***Matthew Keogh*** (1744-1798), a Wexford man who was executed by the British for his prominent part in the Rebellion of 1798. During the rising Matthew Keogh acted as governor of the short-lived "Republic of Wexford"; he was hanged and his head was stuck on a spike above the courthouse.

In American history, a number of Kehoes have achieved prominence of one kind or another.

Lawrence Kehoe (1832-1890) was a strong supporter of the Abolitionist Movement who became a leading American Catholic publisher during the latter part of the

nineteenth century. Born in County Wexford, he emigrated to the United States as a young man and pursued a successful career as a journalist, editor, and publisher in New York City.

John Kehoe came from Wicklow, the county which borders Wexford on the north. Known as Jack Kehoe, he was the leader of the Molly Maguires, a secret organization of Irish coal miners who waged a campaign of violence in the coal fields of eastern Pennsylvania during the 1860s and 1870s in an effort to win better living and working conditions from the mine owners. After a sensational trial, Jack Kehoe was hanged for murder in 1878; he went to his death protesting his innocence. In the 1969 Hollywood motion picture *The Molly Maguires*, the role of Jack Kehoe was played by Sean Connery.

Myles W. Keogh (1840-1876) came from Carlow, the county which borders Wexford on the west. A tall, handsome man, Myles Keogh was a colorful soldier of fortune. In the early 1860s, he served as a volunteer in the papal army in Italy and was awarded a medal for bravery by the Pope. He next distinguished himself for gallantry as an officer in the Union Army during the American Civil War. After the war, Keogh served as a captain in the United States Seventh Cavalry under the flamboyant George Armstrong Custer. Keogh's Company I in the Seventh Cavalry was known as "The Wild I."

Captain Myles W. Keogh,
U.S. Seventh Cavalry.

As a professional cavalry officer, Myles was one Keogh who literally lived out the root Gaelic meaning of his last name: i.e., "a horseman." Myles Keogh's claim to fame in American history is that he died fighting bravely at Custer's Last Stand at the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Keogh's horse, Comanche, was the sole survivor of the massacre. Comanche lived for another fifteen years in honorable retirement, walking on ceremonial occasions at the head of Keogh's old troop, draped in a black mourning net, a pair of cavalry boots slung across the saddle with the toes pointing backward. When Comanche died, the officers of the Seventh Cavalry had him stuffed and donated him to the University of Kansas, where he may be seen today standing patiently in perpetuity inside a large glass case.

Fort Keogh, a former Army post in southeastern Montana near the Custer Battlefield, was named after Captain Myles Keogh.

Donald E. Keyhoe (1897-1988), a former Marine Corps pilot, was the author of the well-known popular book *The Flying Saucers Are Real* as well as several other books on the same subject.

Eugene J. Keogh, a Congressman from New York, gave his name to legislation which he sponsored in 1962 establishing tax-deferred retirement plans for self-employed persons.

The popular "Keogh Plan" has by now become a household word in the United States. When I began practicing law in 1963, the so-called "Keogh Bill" had just been enacted by Congress. As a result, I became the object of jocular references by the tax partners in my law firm to "Bill Kehoe and the Keogh Bill."

Today individuals named Kehoe or Keogh or Keough may be found in all areas of the United States. The greatest concentrations are in the states of New York, California, Massachusetts, Illinois, New Jersey, Florida, Michigan, and Pennsylvania.

In terms of achievement, the Kehoes can claim to have done reasonably well in this country. The current edition of *Who's Who in America* has two listings under *Kehoe*, two under *Keogh*, and three under *Keough*. These consist of two lawyers (New York and Massachusetts), a Federal judge (Florida), a journalist (Connecticut), an editor and publishing executive (California), a librarian (Massachusetts), and a corporate executive (Georgia).

Chapter 3

Where the Kehoes Came From

"Where did your family come from in Ireland?" Frustratingly, that question often has no answer (or at best a very vague one) for lack of oral tradition or written records regarding the family's place of origin in the old country. But in the case of the Kehoe family, we are fortunate in that we know the specific places where both Will's and Julia's families lived. As a second piece of good fortune, it turns out upon visiting there that the area in question is one of the most picturesque and attractive in Ireland.

Bunclody is a town in the northwest corner of County Wexford, situated right on the border with County Carlow. The region immediately in and around Bunclody is where Will Kehoe's family and Julia Kehoe's family both originated. Just a few miles over the border into County Carlow is the

Map of Ireland showing Bunclody in County Wexford on the border of County Carlow.

townland of Kilbranish, where Julia's people were farmers for generations. A mile or so north of Bunclody in County Wexford is the townland of Drumderry, where Will Kehoe's people were farmers for generations. Bunclody itself, a rural market town of about 1,500 inhabitants, is where Will Kehoe's father, Andrew Kehoe, kept a small general store and pub for about twenty years before moving to America.

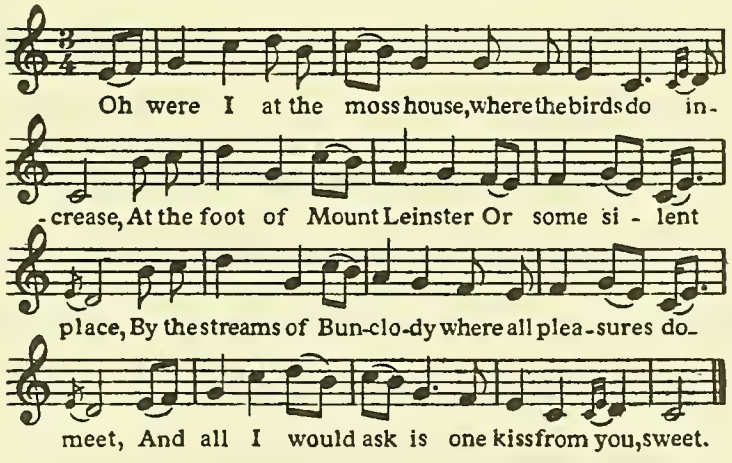
Bunclody is located in a scenic region of rivers, mountains, and rolling green fields. Two pleasant streams, the River Clody and the River Slaney, flow through the town. Just beyond to the west are the Blackstairs Mountains, a small range which culminates in Mount Leinster, an impressive peak of some 2,600 feet which is the largest in that part of Ireland. The farming area of Kilbranish, from which Julia Kehoe's family came, lies in a very picturesque setting at the foot of Mount Leinster.

The Wexford/Carlow countryside in the vicinity of Bunclody is celebrated in an old Irish ballad called "The Maid of Bunclody":

> Oh, were I at the moss house, where the birds do increase,
> At the foot of Mount Leinster or some silent place,
> By the streams of Bunclody where all pleasures do meet,
> And all I would ask is one kiss from you, sweet.

Kilbranish townland at the foot of Mount Leinster.

THE MAID OF BUNCLODY, AND THE LAD SHE LOVES SO DEAR



Oh the streams of Bunclody they flow down so free,
By the streams of Bunclody I'm longing to be,
A-drinking strong liquor in the height of my cheer,
Here's a health to Bunclody and the lass I love dear.

> Oh, the streams of Bunclody they flow down so free,
> By the streams of Bunclody I'm longing to be,
> A-drinking strong liquor in the height of my cheer,
> Here's a health to Bunclody and the lass I love dear.

Bunclody is a neat, attractive country town. Its distinctive feature is its wide, handsomely laid out main street with an island in the middle planted with a row of trees—a rarity in Ireland. At the end of town by Market Square, where Will's father, Andrew Kehoe, kept his store during the 1860s and 1870s, a modern Catholic church now stands opposite a small public park decorated with flowers and a fountain. Nearby is a comfortable present-day pub bearing the appropriate name of *Kehoe's*. A good deal of traffic goes through Bunclody, much of it rural in nature—tractors, farm machinery, wagons loaded with hay.

A short distance past the bridge near the center of town are the convent and school of the Faithful Companions of Jesus, an order of Catholic nuns who have been in Bunclody for more than a century. Katy Kehoe, Will's sister, attended this convent school, where she was educated by the nuns in domestic arts and other genteel subjects, as befitted the only daughter of a widowed local shopkeeper. Will and his five brothers, on the other hand, received a more rough and ready education at the local public school.

What did Bunclody look like more than a hundred years ago when Andrew Kehoe and his family lived there? The answer is, pretty much the same way it looks today. An old black-and-white photograph from that period shows the same row of trees in the island down the middle of the main street, the same houses and shops on either side. There were sidewalks complete with curbings and streetlamps. The street itself was unpaved dirt; donkey carts, instead of automobiles, were to be seen parked along the median strip.

The name *Bunclody* is Gaelic. It means "the mouth (*bun*) of the River Clody," referring to the small river of that name which flows down from Mount Leinster and meets the larger River Slaney in the center of the town. These two rivers are "the streams of Bunclody" which are celebrated in the old ballad. The Irish name was changed in 1577 to an English one, *Newtownbarry*, after one James Barry, Sheriff of Dublin in the early days of the English Protestant domination in Ireland. By this English name the town was called for approximately four centuries; Will and Julia and their families knew the place and always referred to it as *Newtownbarry*. In recent decades, however, the original Irish name of *Bunclody* has been restored. Today the road signs and road maps all refer to *Bunclody*; only rarely do local people call the town by the older name of *Newtownbarry*.

Bunclody a century ago.

Bunclody today.

Kehoe's Pub, Bunclody.

F.C.J. convent and school, Bunclody.

Katy Kehoe outside the convent school attended during the 1870s by her great-great-aunt, Katy Kehoe.

Mount Leinster.

Road sign at Corrabut Gap.

Bunclody is connected historically to the Irish bardic tradition. A couple of miles south of Bunclody is the grave of Eileen Booth of Clonmullen Castle, who inspired the bard Carroll O'Daly (c. 1600) to compose the celebrated Irish love song "Eileen Aroon," which the composer Handel said he would rather have written than all his oratorios.

Take the road west out of Bunclody and you pass immediately into County Carlow. A few miles further along and you're in Kilbranish townland, the farming area where Julia's family originally lived. On your left, rising up beyond the townland, is the scenic peak of Mount Leinster. On an overcast day, the mountain is likely to be shrouded in mist; but if you drive this rising road through Kilbranish on a fine sunny day of fleecy white clouds, you'll get marvelous glimpses and vistas of Mount Leinster and its companion peaks along the opposite side of the valley—scenery as good as you'll find anywhere in Ireland. Near the top of the Corrabut Gap, large stretches of the hillsides and the mountaintops are purple from the heather that grows there in abundance.

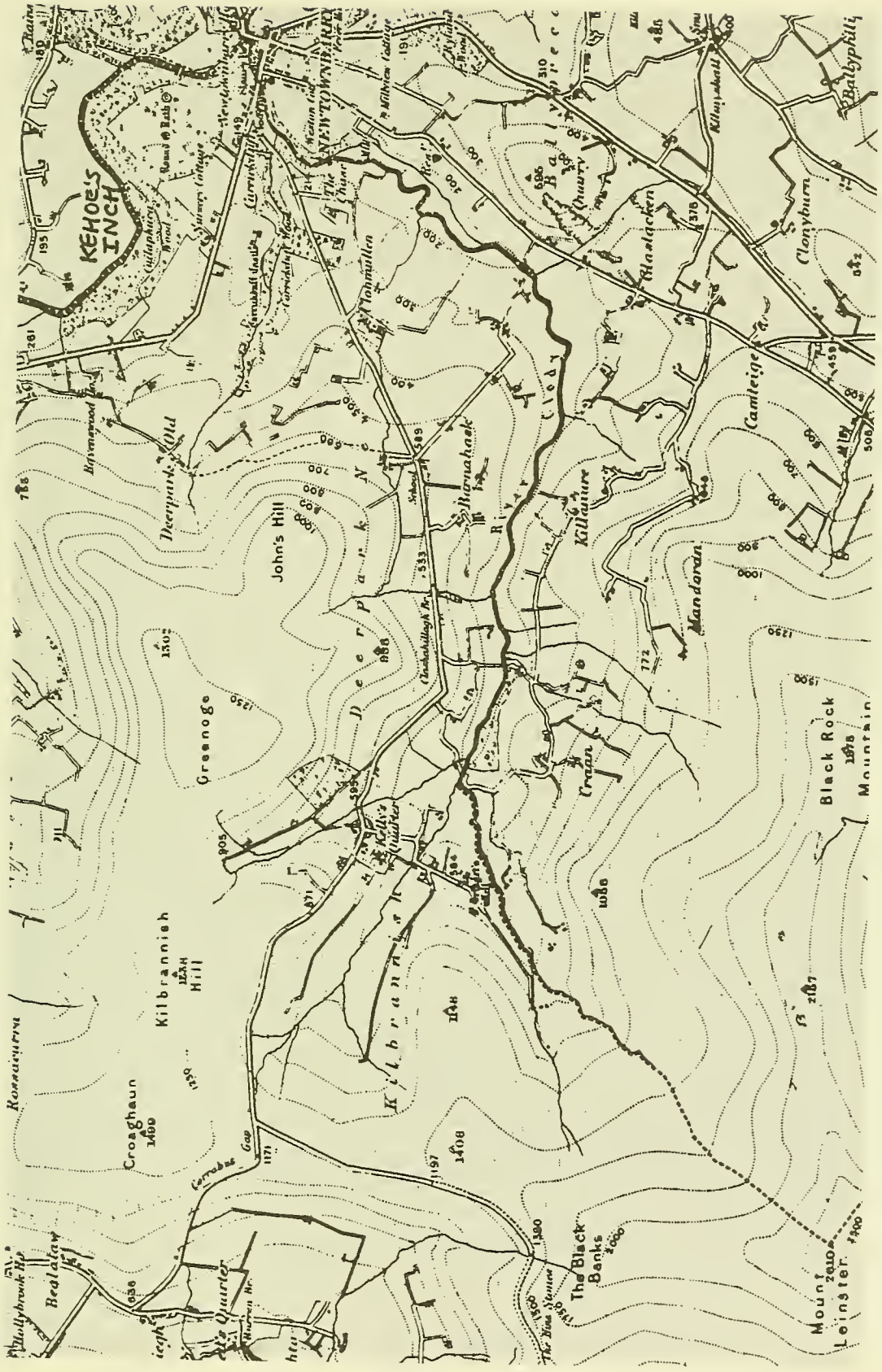
On my first visit there, I stopped to ask a local farmer if this was Kilbranish. He said that it was and that the hill behind us on the right hand side of the road was called Kilbranish Hill. The farmer asked me my name and when my people had gone to America. "There's no Kehoes in Kilbranish

now," he said, shaking his head. "There's Kehoes in Craan, over that way a couple of miles." It appeared that Craan was in County Wexford and that you got there by taking another road that runs out of Bunclody along the far side of the River Clody, which thereabouts marks the border between Carlow and Wexford. After we talked a bit, the farmer looked at me and said with a little smile, "You *could* be a Kehoe, yes you could. But a Kehoe of Craan, I think."

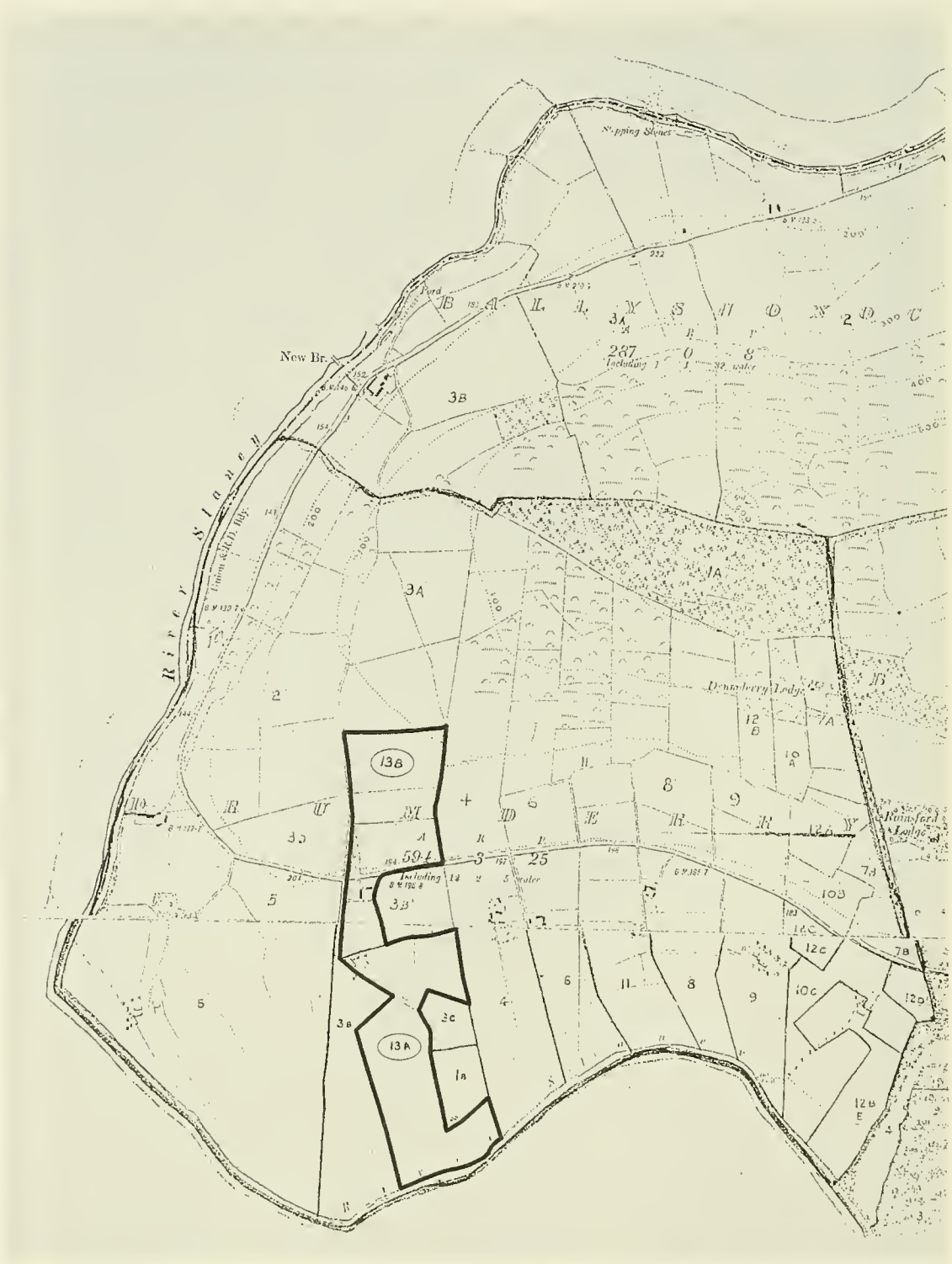
Julia's family lived out on a farm in Kilbranish and Will's father kept a store in town at Bunclody. After finding these two places, I began to wonder where "Kehoe's Inch" might be, the farm on which Will's father's family had lived. Having learned that in Ireland the word *inch* means a meadow near a river, I guessed that "Kehoe's Inch" might be a farm which was located on or near a river. Drumderry, a townland near Bunclody where I knew Andrew Kehoe was born in 1839 and his widowed mother, Catherine Kehoe, died in 1879, seemed to be the likely neighborhood. Sure enough, a look at a large-scale map of the area around Bunclody revealed that the townland of Drumderry is bordered on two sides by the River Slaney, which at that point makes a large bend before flowing on into the town of Bunclody. The map shows a number of farms in Drumderry with land running down to the river. Andrew Kehoe's father, who was also named Andrew,

was recorded as renting a farm of fifty acres in Drumderry in 1853; and a James Kehoe, presumably Andrew Senior's father, was recorded as renting the same farm of fifty acres in Drumderry about twenty years earlier. And that farm, as shown on the nineteenth century tax valuation maps for Drumderry, had a meadow with frontage on the River Slaney. Thus "Kehoe's Inch" was not some tiny piece of land but a sizeable riverside farm which was occupied by several generations of Will's family during the early and middle part of the 1800s. It must have been a reasonably prosperous farm, since the family was able to accumulate enough capital to set Andrew up in business with the store in Bunclody.

As a result of discovering Kehoe's Inch, I had the further good fortune of making contact with a Kehoe third cousin, Maureen Butler, and meeting her when I visited Ireland in 1995. Although she lives in Kilbranish, the townland where Julia's family came from, Maureen is a relation on Will's side of the family: her great-grandfather was James Kehoe, a brother of my great-grandfather (Will's father) Andrew Kehoe. The maiden name of Maureen's mother was Katy Kehoe, the same as my daughter's and my great-aunt's (Will's sister's) name. Maureen showed me an old Kehoe gravestone in the Catholic churchyard at Kildavin and then showed me around the Kehoe farm in Drumderry, where she lived as a girl. Maureen



Map showing Kehoe's Inch and the town of Newtownbarry (now Bunclody) at upper right. Kilbranish townland is at left center with Mount Leinster at bottom left.



Map of Drumderry townland. The 50-acre Kehoe farm property is shown as Lots 13A and 13B.

told me that the first Kehoe in Drumderry, James Kehoe, came originally from Barragh nearby in County Carlow. In the 1780s James Kehoe married a daughter of the Stokes family, who had a farm of one hundred acres in Drumderry. The Stokeses gave half of their property to James Kehoe, thus creating a fifty-acre farm which for more than two hundred years would be occupied continuously by Kehoes and their descendants. The property has remained undivided for two centuries as a result of its being left, generally speaking, to the oldest son in each generation. The fifty-acre Kehoe property in Drumderry is currently owned by Maureen's son, Robert Butler, a great-great-great-great-grandson of James Kehoe.

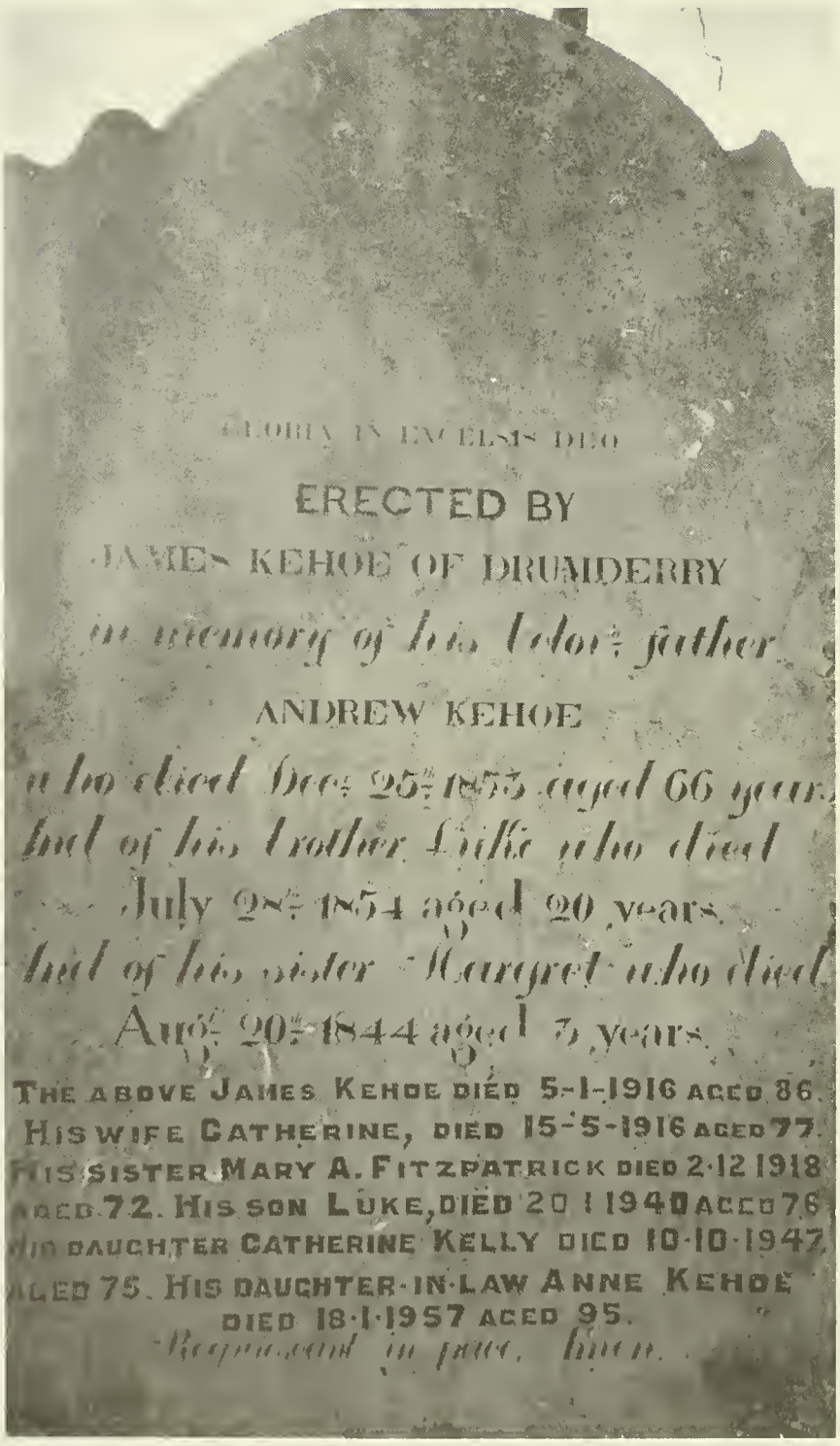
The original homestead building remains today, unoccupied but intact, on the Kehoe farm in Drumderry. A one-story structure in the shape of an L, the building is between 150 and 200 years old. One side of the L was a family residence of several rooms (kitchen, parlor, and two bedrooms with lofts); the other side of the L consisted of a dairy, a turnip house, a cow house, and a pigsty at the far end. The original construction was mortared stone walls with a thatched roof; in the present century this was modified by plastering over the walls and changing the roof to one of corrugated asbestos. Two barns, one original and one modern, stand nearby. The fifty-acre Kehoe property consists of a dozen

Living quarters of the Kehoe homestead (rear view).

Dairy, turnip house, and cow house of the Kehoe homestead.

Looking up Drumderry Hill from the Kehoe homestead.

Kehoe's Inch (left) on the River Slaney.



Kehoe gravestone in the graveyard at St. Lazerian's Church, Kildavin, County Carlow. The Andrew Kehoe who died in 1853 was born in 1787. He was Will's grandfather and a son of James Kehoe, the first Kehoe in Drumderry.

The author (center) in Kilbranish with Kehoe third cousins Maureen Butler and Jimmy Kirwan.

different fields or sections, some stretching gently upward from the farm buildings toward the top of Drumderry Hill, others sloping gradually downward to the River Slaney. The meadow by the river is several hundred yards long and is highly scenic, with little rapids and rocks in the river and a handsomely wooded bank rising up opposite on the County Carlow side of the river. Today this meadow is still known locally as "Kehoe's Inch."

From Kehoe's Inch and Bunclody, the River Slaney flows down for about twelve miles in a southeasterly direction through the fertile central plain of County Wexford to the town of Enniscorthy, where in 1798 the Wexford pikemen died at Vinegar Hill. From there the Slaney continues on for another fifteen miles or so until it reaches the town of Wexford, where it empties into the Irish Sea.

Wexford, the main town from which the county takes its name, has been a trading center and a deep water port for several thousand years. In the second century A.D., the Egyptian mapmaker Ptolemy put Wexford on his map under the name of *Menapia*. From the ninth to the twelfth century, the town was settled by Norse Vikings, who called it *Waesfiord* ("the harbor of the mud flats"), whence comes the modern anglicized name of *Wexford*. Seafaring has long been a Wexford tradition. Commodore John Barry, "the Father of

the American Navy" during our own Revolutionary War, was a Wexford man.

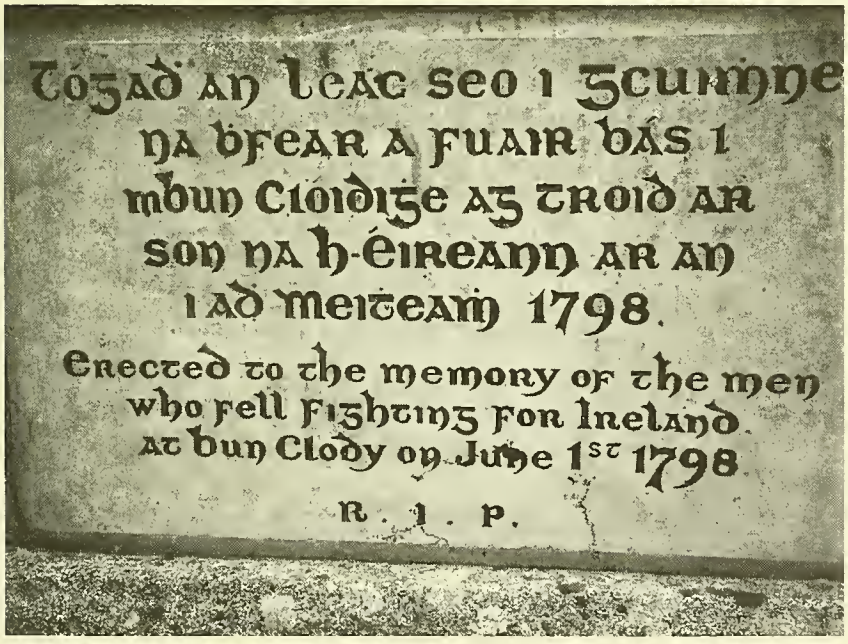
Wexford is very much a Norman county. First came the Vikings, then the Anglo-Normans, who conquered and occupied Wexford from the twelfth century onward. The countryside, with its tree-lined fields and meadows, looks more like Normandy than the stony fields of the west of Ireland. Many Norman-French surnames are found today in Wexford, as is the Norman physical type—a sturdy build and regular, squarish facial features such as you can see in photographs of Will Kehoe and his sister Katy.

County Wexford was a center of the ill-fated uprising of the United Irishmen against British rule in 1798. In other parts of Ireland the rebellion fizzled out fairly quickly, but in Wexford the rebels had considerable success for a time. The towns of Wexford and Enniscorthy were captured by the rebels and a revolutionary "Republic of Wexford" was proclaimed. Bunclody, then known as Newtownbarry, was an important garrison town which rebel forces under the leadership of Father Mogue Kearns, a priest from nearby Kiltealy, captured and held briefly. In Bunclody today, this event is celebrated by a 1798 memorial plaque on the bridge over the River Slaney. To Wexford people the events of 1798 are as memorable as the events of 1776 are to Americans.

Did Will's great-grandfather, James Kehoe, who was living in 1798, witness the fighting which took place in Bunclody between the British troops and the rebel forces? That he did so is certainly a possibility. It is even more intriguing to speculate whether James Kehoe might have participated in that fighting on the side of the Irish rebels.

Two major grievances led the Catholic farmers of Wexford to join in the Rebellion of 1798. One was the oppressive Irish system of land ownership which did not permit them to own their own farms and which exploited them as perpetual tenants of absentee Protestant landlords. The other was the widely resented tithe system whereby Catholic tenants were required by law to pay tithes (taxes) towards the support of the established Protestant Church and its clergy. The Tithe Applotment Book for Kilbranish, County Carlow shows that in the year 1825 an ancestor of ours on Julia's side of the family, Lawrence Dooley, a Catholic tenant farmer holding eighteen acres, was assessed eight shillings seven and one-half pence in tithes. The Tithe Applotment Book for Drumderry, County Wexford shows that in the year 1834 an ancestor of ours on Will's side of the family, James Kehoe, a Catholic tenant farmer holding fifty acres, was assessed two pounds eleven shillings and eight pence in tithes. At Bunclody in the year 1831, Catholic farmers protesting the

1798 memorial plaque on the bridge in Bunclody over the River Slaney.



seizure of cattle for payment of tithes were fired upon by local Protestant yeomanry, leaving fourteen dead and twenty wounded.

Did Will's family and Julia's family know each other in Ireland? This definitely seems possible, given the fact that they lived in the same rural area just a few miles away from each other. Even more to the point is the fact that the two families attended the same church. The townlands of Kilbranish, County Carlow, where Julia's family lived, and Drumderry, County Wexford, where Will's father's family lived, are both in the Catholic parish of St. Brigid's, Clonegal, County Carlow, just across the border from County Wexford. Julia's parents, Thomas Kehoe and Johanna Dooley, would have gone to Mass at St. Lazerian's Church in Kildavin, County Carlow (a "chapel" or "half parish" of St. Brigid's a couple of miles from Clonegal) for some twenty years or so prior to their leaving Ireland in 1864. During the same period of the 1840s and 1850s, Will's father, Andrew Kehoe, would have been living with his parents in Drumderry and attending Mass at the same Catholic church in Kildavin. However, Will and Julia could not have known each other in Ireland because Will was born in Bunclody in 1867 and Julia was born in Boston in 1869. Their meeting would have to wait until Will and his family moved to Boston in the early 1880s.

Chapter 4

Going to America

Julia's family were the first to move to America, leaving Kilbranish in 1864 towards the end of the American Civil War. Will's family left Bunclody for America nearly twenty years later during the early 1880s. Both families settled in the same neighborhood in the same city—the North End of Boston, Massachusetts. It was there that Will and Julia would meet and get to know each other during the 1880s and early 1890s.

Why did Will's and Julia's families leave Ireland? In both cases, for the same reason as millions of other Irish emigrants before and since: to find a better life for themselves and their children in America, the new land of hope and freedom.

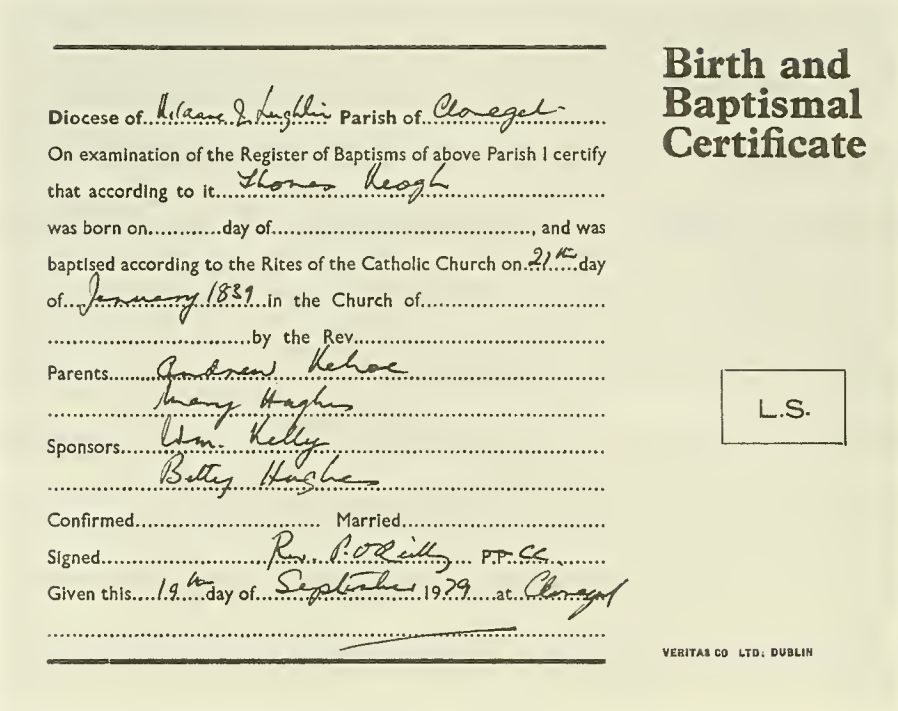
Thomas Kehoe and Johanna Dooley were born in the late 1830s and were married in the early 1860s. In 1864 they

were an Irish couple in their early twenties with one child, a daughter Mary, who had been born the previous fall. Thomas and Johanna were tenant farmers whose families had managed to survive the dreadful Irish potato famine of the late 1840s. Thomas and Johanna did not leave Ireland out of desperation, as hundreds of thousands had done during the famine years; rather, in 1864 they made a voluntary decision to pull up stakes and to move their young family to a new country across the ocean. Economically, this meant a chance for Thomas to earn steady wages in America that would give the family a better living than what they had been scraping out of a small farm for which they had to pay both taxes to the government and rent to a Protestant landlord. Socially, it meant escape from the closed Anglo-Irish caste system and an opportunity for their children to find advancement in the open, democratic society of America. Politically, it meant freedom from the English oppression under which Ireland had suffered for centuries. In the area of religion, it meant living in a more tolerant country where there was no established church.

Thomas Kehoe built a homemade chest of wooden boards three feet by 1½ feet by 1½ feet and chiseled his name "T. KEHOE" on the front of it. In this chest Thomas and Johanna packed their clothing and bedding and kitchen uten-

sils to take with them on the voyage to America. They also packed in the chest one small but very important item: their family prayer book entitled *The Key of Heaven* which was published in Dublin in the year 1860. A handwritten inscription on the flyleaf reads "Thomas Kehoe Kilbranish May the 9th 1864." Very likely the prayer book was a going-away gift from family or friends on the eve of Thomas and Johanna's departure from Ireland. For them this small book represented their Catholic faith, the spiritual inheritance from their forebears which would sustain them through the trials of an unknown future in a strange, faraway land. That they made frequent use of the prayer book is evident from the condition in which it survives today: worn, well thumbed, the binding cracked, with a homemade repair of cloth on the spine hand-stitched crudely to the inside of the front and back covers.

What did Thomas and Johanna feel upon leaving Kilbranish in 1864? They surely felt hope for the future and the promise of a better life in America. But at the same time, they surely felt a terrible sadness at leaving behind everything that was familiar to them—their home, their families, their friends, their beautiful native countryside. The sense of loss would have been total, for in those days an Irish emigrant was saying goodbye forever. Not for nothing was the emigrant's farewell party called an "American wake." Lack of



Birth and Baptismal Certificate

Diocese of Meath & Louth Parish of Clonegal

On examination of the Register of Baptisms of above Parish I certify that according to it Thomas Keogh

was born on .....day of....., and was baptised according to the Rites of the Catholic Church on 21st day of January 1839 in the Church of .....

.....by the Rev.....

Parents Andrew Kehoe
Mary Hughes

Sponsors Wm. Kelly
Betty Hughes

Confirmed..... Married.....

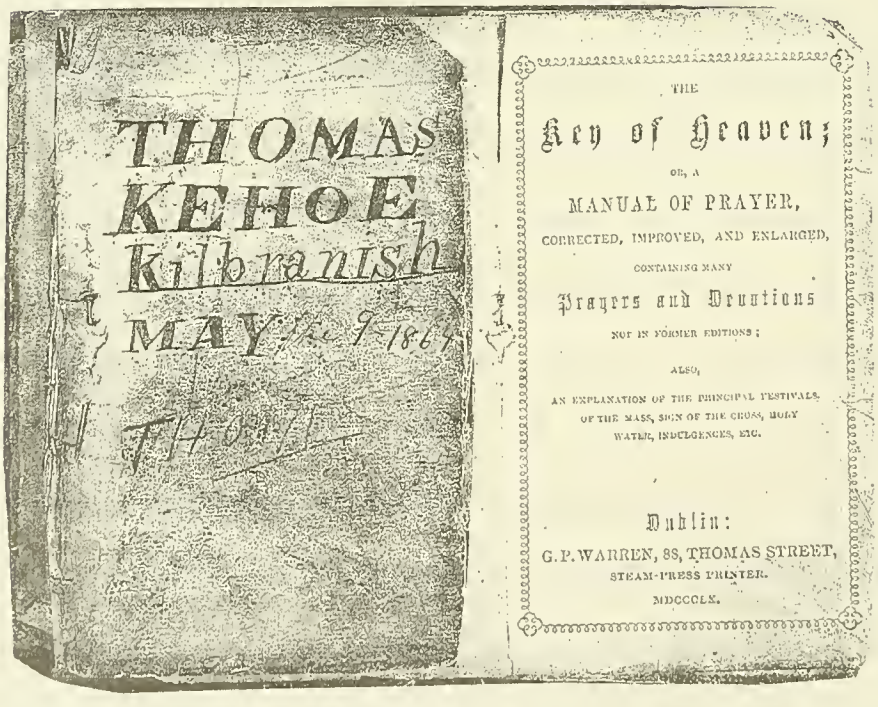
Signed Rev. P. O'Reilly P.P. Clg

Given this 19th day of September 1979 at Clonegal

L.S.

VERITAS CO LTD: DUBLIN

Certificate of Thomas Kehoe's baptism in 1839.



Thomas Kehoe's prayer book.

Thomas and Johanna Kehoe shortly after their arrival in America.

money meant that there would never be a return visit; the emigrant would live and die in America, three thousand miles across the Atlantic Ocean, without ever seeing the old country again. In traditional Irish songs, the sad theme of exile is a strong and recurring one. The ballad "The Maid of Bunclody," which celebrates the idyllic Wexford/Carlow countryside with its rivers at the foot of Mount Leinster, begins as a love song but ends on the theme of exile dictated by economic hardship:

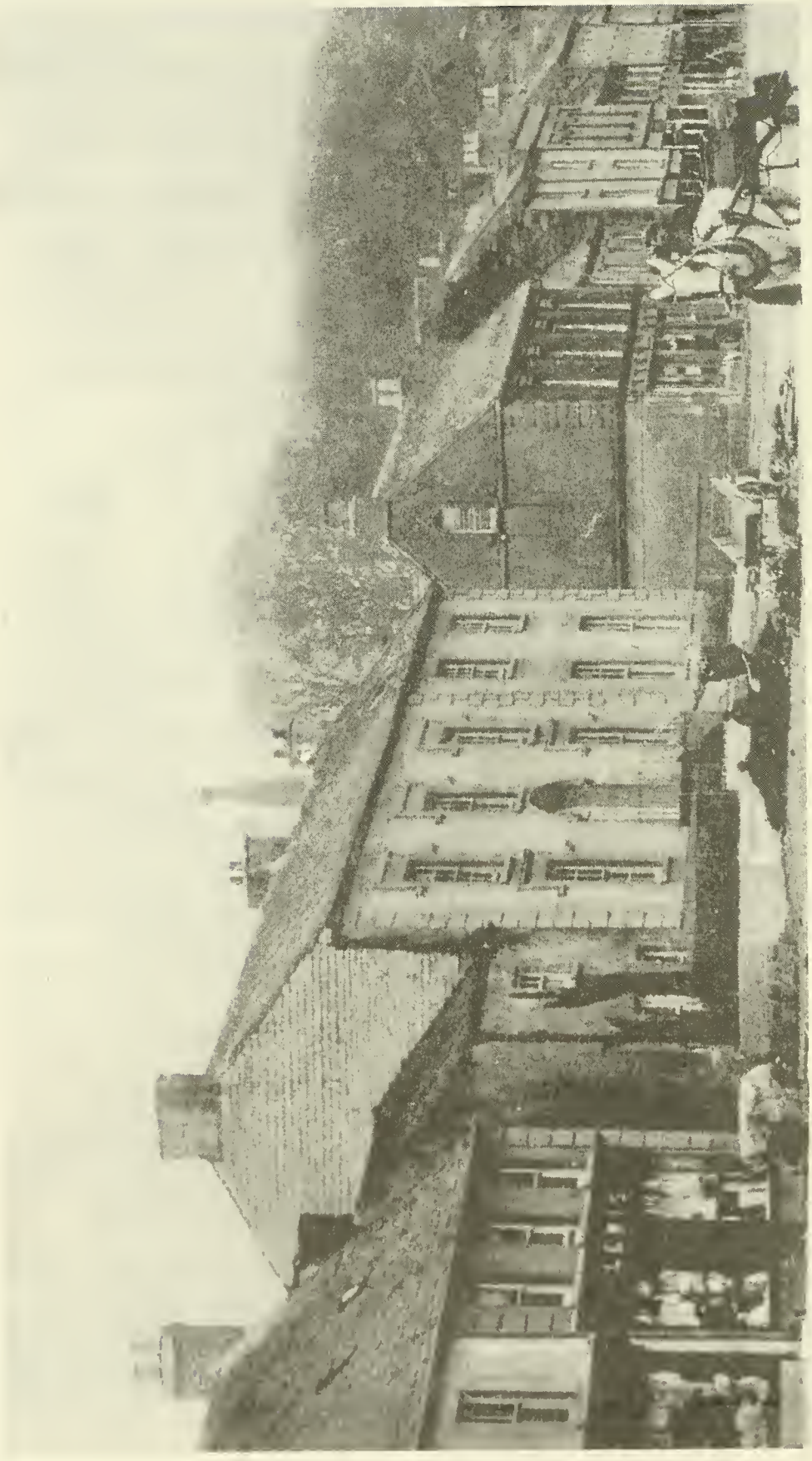
> If I was a clerk and could write a good hand,
> I would write to my true-love that she might understand,
> For I am a young fellow who is wounded in love,
> Once I lived in Bunclody, but now must remove.
>
> 'Tis why my love slights me, as you may understand,
> That she has a freehold and I have no land,
> She has great store of riches, and a large sum of gold,
> And everything fitting a house to uphold.
>
> So fare you well father and my mother, adieu,
> My sister and brother farewell unto you,
> I am bound for America my fortune to try,
> When I think on Bunclody I'm ready to die.

In the latter part of the year 1864, Thomas and Johanna left Kilbranish with their infant daughter Mary. Johanna was

then pregnant with their second child. They traveled south through County Wexford and County Waterford down to Queenstown (now known as Cobh), the transatlantic port on the east coast of County Cork from which great numbers of Irish emigrants sailed to America during the nineteenth century. Money being short, Thomas and Johanna would have traveled steerage, the cheapest class of shipboard accommodation available in those days. Steerage resembled a troopship, with the passengers jammed below decks into cramped quarters with narrow bunks, spartan food, no toilets, and no fresh air. When the ship finally docked in America, Thomas and Johanna were undoubtedly delighted to be getting off. Where they landed is not certain, for their names do not appear on the Port of Boston passenger lists for the year 1864. Possibly they landed in New York because that was where the ship happened to be going. However, it is clear enough that Thomas and Johanna by one route or another made their way to Boston, for that is where their second child, Andrew, was born in January, 1865.

Three more children were born to Thomas and Johanna in Boston: Michael in 1867, Julia in 1869, and Alice in 1872.

How Will's family moved from Ireland to America is a somewhat different story. Whereas all but one of Thomas and Johanna's children were born here in the United States, all of



Market Square, Bunclody, in the early part of the present century. The building at left with the name "Lewis" is the store which Andy Keboe operated during the 1860s and 1870s.

Andrew Kehoe's children were born in Ireland.

Andrew Kehoe was born in 1839 and grew up on his family's farm in Drumderry near Bunclody. Around the time he turned twenty-one, Andrew was married to Mary Ann Hickey, a young woman from Castledermot, a town in County Kildare not far from Bunclody. Their first child, James, was born in 1861. Six more children were born in the following years:

Andrew	1862
Gerald	1863
Michael	1864
Catherine	1866
William	1867
Luke	1871

An eighth child, John, died at birth in 1869. After having had eight children in the space of ten years, Mary Ann Kehoe died in 1873 at the age of thirty-six. In 1880, Andrew was a forty-year-old widower with a large family of teenage children. At that point in his life, he decided to move to America.

What motivated Andrew Kehoe to leave Ireland in the early 1880s? For some twenty years he had been running a store in the town of Bunclody. Very possibly Andrew was in business with his older brother James, after whom Andrew named his own first son. In Slater's *Directory of Ireland* pub-

lished in 1881, one James Kehoe is listed as being a grocer, spirit dealer, and linen draper in the town of Bunclody (then called Newtownbarry). That certainly sounds like the "general store and pub" which according to family tradition Andrew was operating in Bunclody during this period. The year 1881 is when Andrew is said to have gone to America. Possibly Andrew sold his interest to James, who continued to run the store after Andrew's departure. Perhaps business was not very good; perhaps Andrew was tired of running the store; perhaps he and James had a falling out. When their mother, Catherine Kelly Kehoe, had died a year or so earlier, the family farm in Drumderry had passed in traditional fashion to James as the oldest son, to the exclusion of Andrew as a younger son; perhaps the ownership of the family store in Bunclody had similarly passed to James as the oldest son, leaving Andrew at the age of forty with neither land nor a business of his own.Whatever the various possible reasons for Andrew's decision to move to America, it is likely that a major consideration was his children's future, that Andrew saw better prospects for employment for his six sons and better prospects for marriage for his daughter in the United States than in the small rural market town of Bunclody.

According to his daughter Katy's recollection, Andrew emigrated to America "in around 1882 or 1881." Because pas-

senger lists for those years unfortunately do not exist, we cannot document Andrew's arrival in Boston. However, a passenger list does show that Andrew's five younger children—William, Catherine, Michael, Gerald, and Luke—arrived in Boston as steerage passengers on the S.S. *Iowa* on May 5, 1883. This suggests that Andrew came to America with his two oldest sons, James and Andrew, in 1881 or thereabouts, leaving the five younger children in the care of his family in Bunclody until he had gotten established in Boston and was able to send for the younger children a year or two later.

As Irish immigrants, both Julia's family and Will's family arrived in America with two great advantages. They spoke English and they could read and write. Thus the transition to the new country was easier and faster for them than for immigrants from Continental countries such as Italy, Germany, Sweden, and Russia, the vast majority of whom could neither speak nor read English. For these advantages the Irish ironically enough had to thank the British government, which early in the nineteenth century had established an excellent system of public schools throughout Ireland. From 1831 onward, the Irish had the benefit of a free grammar school education. In those days many of the Irish still spoke Gaelic; however, the great majority also spoke English and welcomed the opportunity to attend the public schools,

Irish emigrants leaving Queenstown (now Cobh) Harbor. Engraving from the Illustrated London News of September, 1874.

which were conducted entirely in Engish. Will's and Julia's grandparents, who were born in the first decade or so of the 1800s, would have spoken both Gaelic and English; whether they could read and write is not certain. Will's and Julia's parents, who were all born in the late 1830s, would have attended public school where they learned to read and write in English. They probably spoke some Gaelic but less than their parents, for by then the native language was fading into disuse. There is no record or recollection of either Will Kehoe or his sister Katy, who both grew up in Bunclody during the 1870s, ever speaking any Gaelic or using any Gaelic words.

A question which comes to mind is whether Thomas, Johanna, and Andrew were accompanied or followed to America by any of their brothers or sisters. With only two exceptions, the answer is "No." Andrew was one of six children; all of his siblings—James, Luke, Walter, Michael, and Mary Ann—remained in Ireland. Thomas presumably had one or more siblings, but as far as we know they all stayed in Ireland. The only exceptions were two of Johanna's sisters who moved to Boston, Sarah Dooley and Kate Dooley. Sarah (1839-1924) married a man named Thomas Richmond but had no children. Kate married a man named Isaac Robinson in Arlington, Massachusetts and had two children, Thomas and Nora, who were cousins of Julia's. Sarah and Kate Dooley and

their families were friendly over the years with Julia's family. Nora Robinson, Julia's cousin, married a man named Dennis Collins and had four children (Charles, Leonard, Agatha, and Herbert Collins) who as second cousins were friendly with Julia's children. When I attended the Hobbs Junior High School in Medford during the mid-1940s, the principal was my father's second cousin, Herbert ("Hubba") Collins, a noted University of Massachusetts athlete who had gone into teaching as a career. Later at Dartmouth during the early 1950s, I met a Charlie Collins from Arlington who was a couple of classes ahead of me and who was by my calculation a third cousin of mine via descent from Johanna's sister Kate Dooley. Our only other known collateral Kehoe relatives in this country today are the descendants of the eight McDowell children of Julia's older sister, Mary Kehoe McDowell (1863-1936); one of Mary McDowell's grandchildren, Mary McCarthy Judd, a second cousin of mine, was a good friend of my mother's during her later years.

Chapter 5

Life in the North End

Nobody today could imagine the North End of Boston as being an Irish neighborhood. Everyone thinks of it as being an overwhelmingly Italian neighborhood, which is what is has been throughout the present century. It is also the location of Revolutionary War landmarks such as Paul Revere's House and the Old North Church, which date back to the North End's earlier period as the original Yankee settlement of Boston from 1630 onward. But in between the Yankee era and the Italian era, the North End was for a good part of the nineteenth century an overwhelmingly Irish neighborhood. From roughly 1850 through the 1880s, a continuing tide of immigration filled the North End with steerage passengers off the boats from Ireland. For these Irish immigrants, the North End was their first stop in America, a

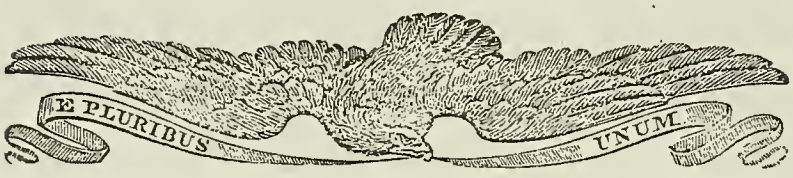
place where they could find inexpensive housing, jobs doing manual labor, and people of their own religion and nationality to associate with. During this period, the North End was an Irish Catholic enclave in a Yankee Protestant city. Eventually, after they established themselves and started to prosper, the Irish would move on to more fashionable parts of Boston or its suburbs, leaving the North End to be taken over in turn by more recent immigrants from other European countries.

Both Will's family and Julia's family settled in the same section of the North End: that is, the neighborhood near the Copp's Hill Burial Ground, the North Station, and the bridge across the Charles River to the Charlestown section of Boston. Located in this area on Commercial Street was a large gasworks where the Boston Gas Company manufactured illuminating gas. When Thomas Kehoe arrived in Boston in 1864, he found a job working as a laborer at the gasworks and a place for his family to live in a house at 283 Causeway Street, just around the corner from the gasworks. Similarly, when Andrew Kehoe arrived in the early 1880s, he found a job working as a laborer at the gasworks and a place for his family to live in a house at 158 Prince Street, directly across the street from the gasworks. If you have ever smelled one in operation, you will understand that the presence of the gasworks in this section of the North End did not serve to

make it a pleasant or attractive neighborhood.

In finding a place to live and a job at the gasworks, both Thomas and Andrew as newly-arrived immigrants very likely had help from the Irish political organization which ran the North End in those days. The organization and its boss assisted families and individuals in all kinds of ways, including finding jobs and housing; in return, the recipients were expected to demonstrate their loyalty with voting support and campaign contributions at election time. Before they could vote, however, immigrants such as Thomas and Andrew had to become naturalized citizens of the United States. The political organization worked diligently to shepherd the new Irish arrivals through this process at the earliest possible date in order to get them onto the voting rolls. The law in those days required a period of five years' residence in the United States before an alien could be naturalized; to get around this bothersome requirement, it was commonplace for one of the ward boss's lieutenants to falsify the date of an immigrant's arrival. The organization had naturalization specialists who would stand as sponsors to large numbers of newcomers, swearing falsely as to the length of time they had been in this country. Thus, Thomas Kehoe became an American citizen in February, 1867, only a couple of years or so after his arrival, on the basis of a false arrival date of 1854 which was shown on

United States of America.



MASSACHUSETTS DISTRICT, ss.

To all People to whom these Presents shall come,—Greeting.

Know Ye, That at a Special District Court of the United States, holden at Boston, within and for the Massachusetts District, on the fifteenth day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty Seven,

Thomas Kehoe

of Boston in said District Laborer born in the County Carlow, Ireland having produced the evidence, and taken and subscribed the oath, required by law, was admitted to become a citizen of the United States, according to the Acts of Congress, in such case made and provided.

In Testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and affixed the seal of said Court at Boston aforesaid, this fifteenth day of February A.D. 1867, and in the Ninety first year of the Independence of the United States of America.

S. P. Thwing

Clerk of the United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

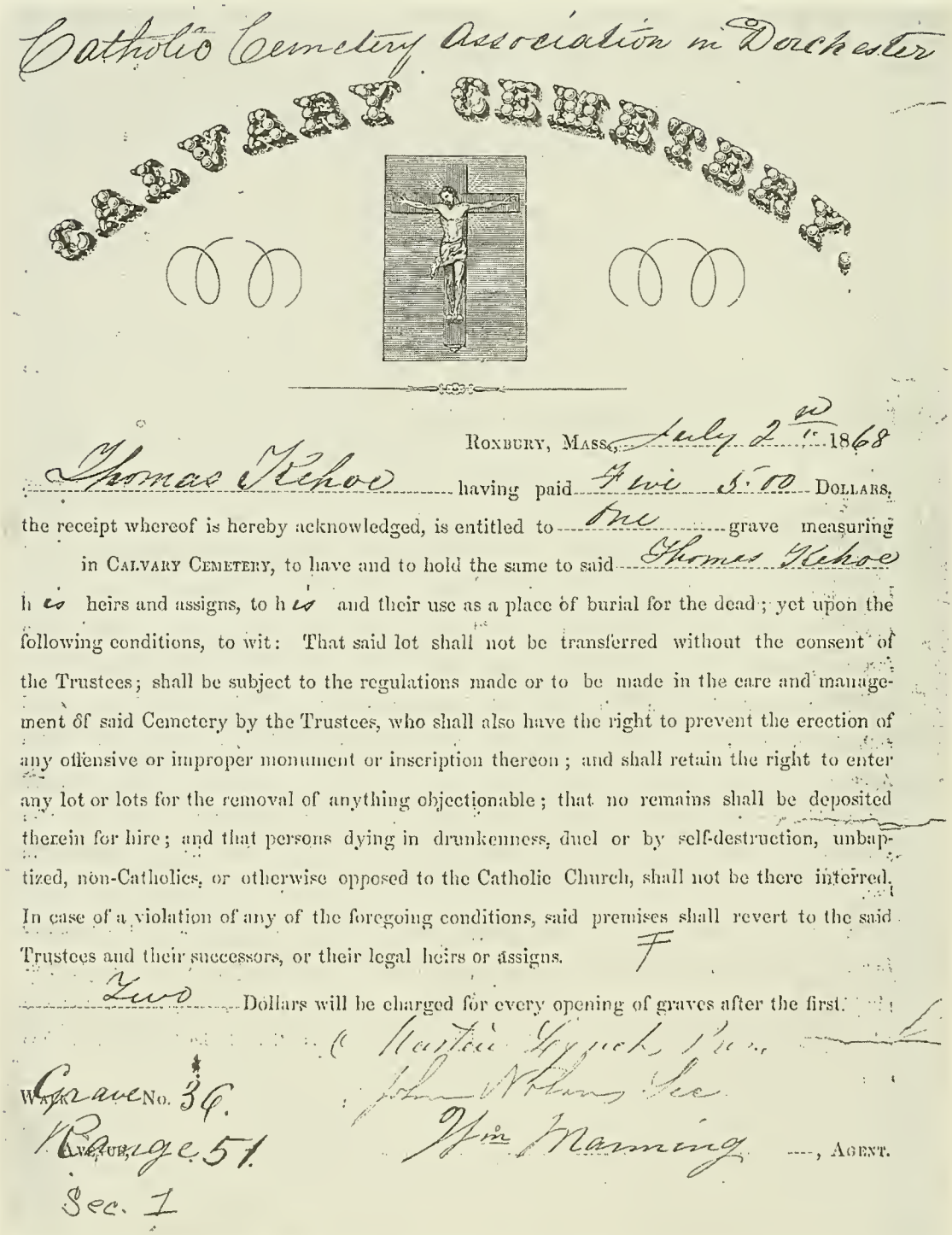
Certificate of Thomas Kehoe's naturalization in 1867.

his petition for naturalization. Similarly, Andrew Kehoe became an American citizen in February, 1883, no more than a couple of years after his arrival, on the basis of a false arrival date of 1856 which was shown on his petition for naturalization.

Under the law in effect at that time, the naturalization of a foreign-born male automatically conferred American citizenship upon his foreign-born wife and minor children. Thus, Thomas Kehoe's wife Johanna and his foreign-born daughter Mary became American citizens as a result of his naturalization. Similarly, all of Andrew Kehoe's foreign-born children (except the oldest, James, who was then of age) became American citizens as a result of his naturalization.

As soon as he became a citizen, Thomas registered to vote in the North End ward where he lived. His poll tax bills from the City of Boston for the years 1867 through 1874 show that Thomas faithfully paid the two-dollar annual poll tax that qualified a man in those days to cast his ballot.

Thomas Kehoe is remembered as being a tall man, over six feet in height, with fair skin and blue eyes. He was killed in 1875 in an explosion at the gasworks. Thomas died at the age of thirty-six, leaving his wife Johanna with five young children. He was buried in a grave in Calvary Cemetery in the Roxbury section of Boston which he had bought for five



Catholic Cemetery Association in Dorchester

CALVARY CEMETERY.

ROXBURY, MASS., July 2nd 1868

Thomas Kehoe having paid Five 5.00 DOLLARS, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, is entitled to One grave measuring in CALVARY CEMETERY, to have and to hold the same to said Thomas Kehoe his heirs and assigns, to his and their use as a place of burial for the dead; yet upon the following conditions, to wit: That said lot shall not be transferred without the consent of the Trustees; shall be subject to the regulations made or to be made in the care and management of said Cemetery by the Trustees, who shall also have the right to prevent the erection of any offensive or improper monument or inscription thereon; and shall retain the right to enter any lot or lots for the removal of anything objectionable; that no remains shall be deposited therein for hire; and that persons dying in drunkenness, duel or by self-destruction, unbaptized, non-Catholics, or otherwise opposed to the Catholic Church, shall not be there interred. In case of a violation of any of the foregoing conditions, said premises shall revert to the said Trustees and their successors, or their legal heirs or assigns. F

Two Dollars will be charged for every opening of graves after the first.

Martin Lynch, Pres.
John Nolan, Sec.
Wm Manning, AGENT.

WALK Grave No. 36.
AVENUE, Range 51.
Sec. 1

Deed of cemetery lot purchased by Thomas Kehoe in 1868.

Thomas Kehoe ..... Wd. 2.

YOUR STATE, CITY, AND COUNTY TAX.

No Abatement shall be allowed to a person unless he makes application therefor within six months after the date of his Tax bill.—General Statutes, Chap. XI. Sec. 47.

Poll ..... 2 ..

Real Estate ....

Personal Estate, or Income ....

Costs ....

Interest ....

1870

PRO RATA per 1,000 Dollars.
STATE TAX . . . . $ 1.65
CITY AND COUNTY TAX 13.65
$15.30

Received Payment, ... Nov 5 187 0

City Treasurer.

☞ NOTICE TO TAX PAYERS. By City Ordinance, passed *January* 3, 1868, Tax bills are to be issued on or before October 1, of each year, and if not paid within thirty days thereafter—*by Statute* 1807, c. 134, § 2,—a *summons* to be issued. If not paid in ten days after such *summons*, with twenty cents for said *summons*, a *warrant* to be issued. *Fees* for collection under *warrant*, as follows, viz.: four per cent on the first one hundred dollars; two per cent on the second one hundred dollars; and one per cent on the balance of the bill. The above *summons* and *fees* belong to the Deputy Collectors, and the Treasurer *is obliged to exact them*. *Interest* also will be charged.

All Taxes assessed on Real Estate, become a lien on said Estate.

The Certificate of an abatement must be exhibited to the Collector, and all costs and fees incurred before such exhibition must be paid.

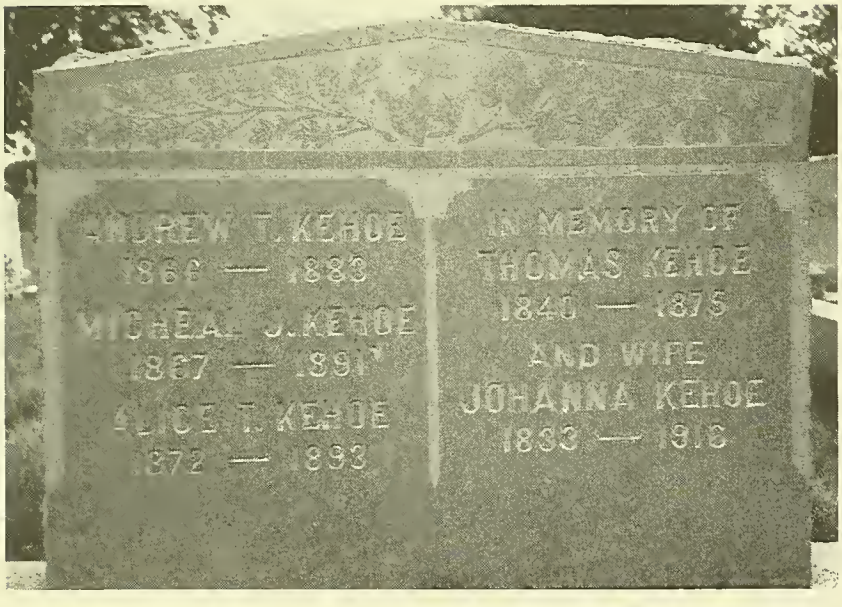
Each Heir is liable for the *whole* Tax assessed to the heirs of an undivided Estate.

Each Partner is liable for the *whole* Tax assessed to his firm.

BOSTON, OCTOBER 1, 1870. FREDERIC U. TRACY, { Treasurer and Collector.

Treasurer's Office, City Hall. Hours—From 9 A.M. to 2 P.M.

Thomas Kehoe's poll tax bill for the year 1870.



Grave of Thomas and Johanna Kehoe, Holy Cross Cemetery, Malden, Massachusetts.

dollars a few years earlier. Undoubtedly, the Irish political organization in the North End helped the widowed Johanna in various ways to make ends meet during the difficult years between the time of her husband's death and the time when her children would be old enough to go to work and help support the family.

Johanna suffered another grievous loss when her oldest son, Andrew, died of pneumonia at the age of sixteen on December 19, 1881. A few days later, her daughter Julia, who was then twelve years old, wrote Johanna this Christmas letter:

Boston, Dec. 23, 1881

My Dear Mother,

You have always given me very nice Christmas gifts and I cannot tell you how very happy I feel to be able this year for the first time to offer you a little gift in the shape of a Christmas letter. I love you more than I know how to say but I shall tell little Jesus for He understands what we mean as He can read our hearts. I shall tell Him you are the dearest Mother in the whole world and that if He will only come into your heart on His happy Birthday He will find a warm shelter from the wintry blast. I ask pardon for being so often during the past year a naughty girl and promise to do for the future all that I know will give you pleasure.

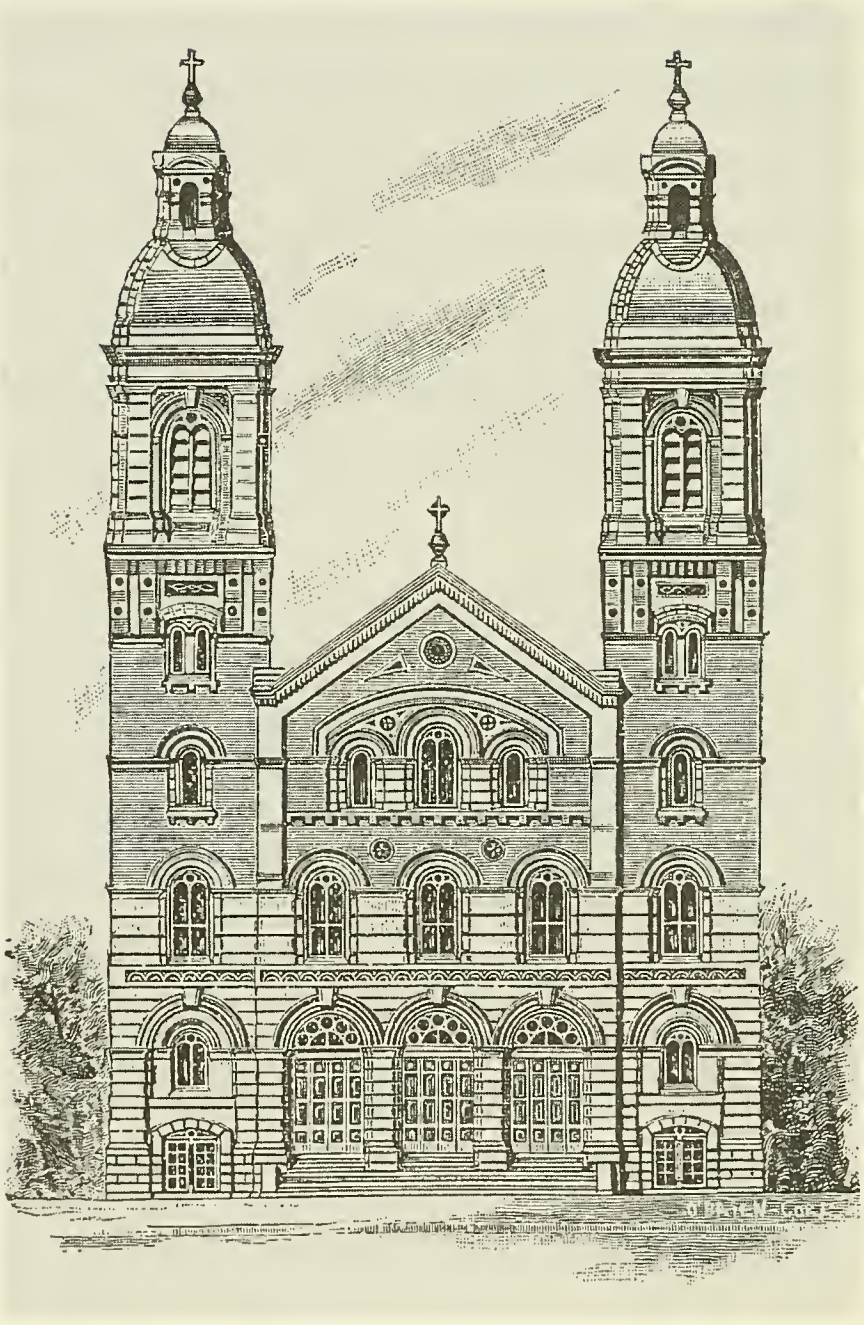
Your loving little girl,
Julia

In that grim, sad Christmastime, Johanna's heart was touched and lifted by Julia's sweet, affectionate letter, which Johanna would put away and treasure for the rest of her life.

During the time she lived in the North End, Johanna suffered further personal losses. In 1891, her other son, Michael, died of pneumonia at the age of twenty-four. And in 1893, her youngest daughter, Alice, died at the age of twenty-one from tuberculosis, which she is said to have contracted while working in a printing plant. Of her husband and five children, Johanna was to be left with only her two daughters Mary and Julia.

When her son Michael died in 1891, Johanna bought a double lot in which she buried him at Holy Cross Cemetery in Malden. At the same time she had the remains of her husband, Thomas, and her older son, Andrew, transferred from Calvary Cemetery in Roxbury to the new lot at Holy Cross. There her daughter Alice and eventually Johanna herself would be buried.

Johanna was a very religious woman who had a calm, placid disposition. Her granddaughters Alice and Kathryn recalled her as having beautiful, smooth, unwrinkled skin even in her old age. Johanna would tell her granddaughters how, when she was a girl on the farm back in Ireland, they would milk the cows and wash their faces with the milk.

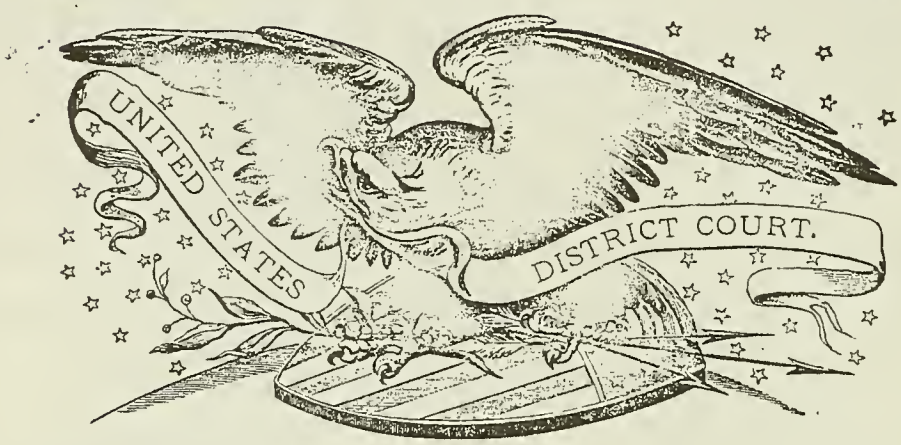


St. Mary's Church, North End, Boston.

My father recalled that Johanna would say to him when he was growing up, "You'll be as big as Finn McCool" (a legendary giant in Irish folklore). Mary Nolan said of Johanna, "She was a saint."

After the death of her husband, Johanna continued to live at 283 Causeway Street in the North End until around the year 1880, when she moved a few blocks down to 131 Endicott Street. There she would remain until she left the North End some twenty years later. At this address, Johanna was directly across the street from her parish church, St. Mary's, which was located on Cooper Street at the corner of Endicott. When Thomas and Johanna arrived in 1864, there were two Catholic churches ministering to the Irish in the North End, St. Stephen's and St. Mary's, of which St. Mary's was the older and the larger. Staffed by priests of the Jesuit order, St. Mary's was a mission church whose ministry extended beyond its parish boundaries. St. Mary's had a sizable parish hall where various functions were held. In addition, St. Mary's parochial school was located across the street; there Julia and her brothers and sisters were educated by the nuns in religion and secular subjects. St. Mary's school had been established in 1859 as the result of an incident in which an Irish boy of the parish had been severely punished by a public school teacher for refusing to read a passage from the Protestant Bible.

United States of America.



MASSACHUSETTS DISTRICT, ss.

To all People to whom these presents shall come,—Greeting.

Know Ye, That at a District Court of the United States, holden at Boston, within and for the Massachusetts District, on the twenty-eighth day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand ~~eight~~ eight hundred and eighty-three

Andrew Kehoe

of Boston in said District, a Laborer born in County Wexford, Ireland having produced the evidence, and taken and subscribed the oath required by law, was admitted to become a Citizen of the United States, according to the Acts of Congress in such case made and provided. As appears of Record in said Court.

Certificate of Andrew Kehoe's naturalization in 1883.

The North End in those days has been described as an Irish slum—which it was, given the overcrowding of immigrant families into dark, dirty tenements, the unsanitary conditions in which many of them lived, and the lack of public amenities. But despite poverty and hardships, the Irish in the North End had a sense of community which was based on their common national origin, their social and political organizations, and their church. Above all, the Catholic church gave these Irish immigrants a sense of institutional solidarity, as well as spiritual support and fellowship, in an unfamiliar, often unfriendly city dominated by an established population of Yankee Protestants.

When Andrew Kehoe and his children arrived in the North End in the early 1880s, they lived on Prince Street, just a couple of blocks from Johanna and her family on Endicott Street. This meant that Will's family and Julia's family both attended St. Mary's Church and participated in social and religious functions there. It seems likely that the two families knew each other and were friendly. Very possibly, Andrew, following his arrival in the North End, renewed an acquaintance which he had formed in Ireland when he was a fellow parishioner of Johanna's at the Catholic church in Kildavin, County Carlow, during the 1840s and 1850s. A further reason for thinking that the two families were friendly, both in Ireland

Will's sister, Katherine Kehoe Nolan, at the time of her marriage and in her later years.

and in the North End, is the fact that Julia and Will were said to have had "cousins in common."

Like immigrants of any nationality, the Irish had a tendency to stick together upon arriving in the United States. Not only did they live in Irish neighborhoods but in many cases they tended to associate with other families who had come over from the same region or even the same town in Ireland. Thus Will's sister Katy in 1889 married a man named John Nolan, who had come from Ballycrystal, a townland of Kiltealy, a small town in County Wexford located only a few miles from Bunclody. In all likelihood, the acquaintance of the Kehoes and the Nolans went back to the old country. Because John Nolan was a liquor dealer with a business of his own in Boston, the marriage was indeed a good one for the only daughter of Andrew Kehoe, the former shopkeeper who was now working as a manual laborer.

Andrew Kehoe stayed with his job at the gas works in the North End for about five years, following which he was employed as a paperhanger and whitewasher for the remainder of his working life. Throughout the 1880s, Andrew lived at 158 Prince Street in the North End; in the early 1890s, he moved a couple of blocks over to 124 Charlestown Street (now North Washington Street), still in the same North End neighborhood of St. Mary's Catholic parish. A very handy

man with tools, Andrew went by the nickname of "Andy." He was remembered by my father, his grandson, as being "a little spider of a guy"—small, alert, quick, and active. Alice and Kathryn Kehoe remembered him as a martinet, standing very straight, who was very precise and who insisted on having things just so and proper. His granddaughter Mary Nolan recalled his supervising her homework when she was a girl. "He was very strict. He'd only give you so much time to do a column of figures." In his later years, when Andy would visit the home of Will and Julia in Charlestown, he would typically try to "get a rise" out of Julia's mother, Johanna, by instigating an argument with her over one thing or another. In this characteristic, Andy was resembled by his son Will (not to mention Will's three sons Bill, Fred, and Arthur).

There was another Irish immigrant family who settled in the North End around the same time as Thomas and Johanna in the early 1860s. They were Wexford people by the name of Fitzgerald. One of the Fitzgerald sons, John, was a bright, ambitious, highly energetic fellow who involved himself actively in the Irish social and political organizations of the North End during the 1880s. John knew every voter in the ward by name; he attended every dance, picnic, wedding, wake, or funeral he could find, making friends and useful connections wherever he went. All this activity paid off

To the Honorable the Judge of the Probate Court in and for the County of Suffolk:

RESPECTFULLY represents Michael J. Kehoe

of Boston in said County

that Andrew J Kehoe

who last dwelt in said Boston

died on the Nineteenth day of May

in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and eighty-seven intestate,

possessed of goods and estate remaining

to be administered, leaving no widow ~~whose name is~~

and as he is only next of kin the persons whose names, residences and relationship to the deceased are as follows, viz.: Catharine Kehoe, William J Kehoe, Gerald P. Kehoe, Lucie J. Kehoe, Michael J Kehoe sister and brothers of said deceased all living in said Boston and James J Kehoe of Chicago, State of Illinois brother of said deceased and Andrew Kehoe father of said deceased, living in said Boston.

that your petitioner is the brother of said deceased and is requested by the father of said deceased, his only heir, to act as Administrator

Wherefore your petitioner prays that he may be appointed administrator of the estate of said deceased.

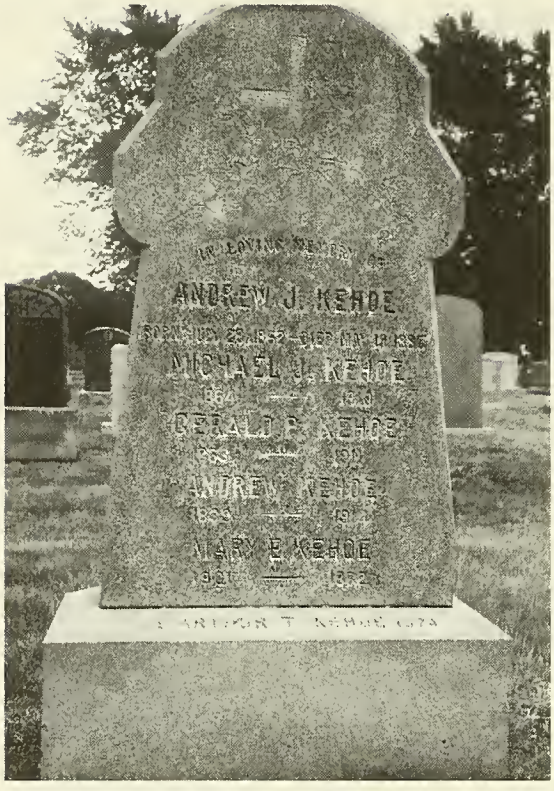
Dated this Sixth day of June A.D. 1887

Michael J Kehoe

The undersigned, being all the parties interested in the foregoing petition, desire the same may be granted without further notice.

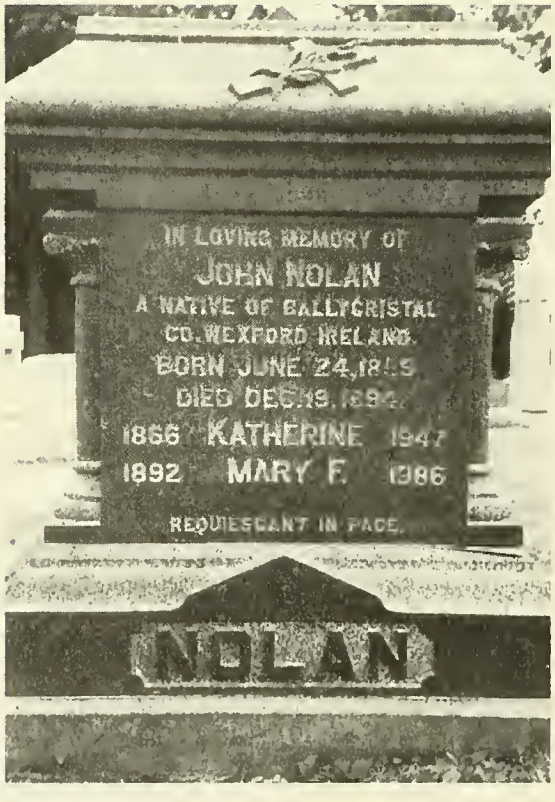
Andrew J Kehoe

Petition for administration of the estate of Andy Kehoe's son, Andrew J. Kehoe, in 1887. The signature of Andy Kehoe appears at the bottom.



Grave of Will's father,
Andrew Kehoe,
Holy Cross Cemetery,
Malden, Massachusetts.

Grave of Will's sister,
Katherine Kehoe Nolan,
Holy Cross Cemetery,
Malden, Massachusetts.



handsomely, for by 1892 John F. Fitzgerald had become the recognized political boss of the North End. Known first as "The North End Napoleon" and later as "Honey Fitz," he was a colorful figure in the Boston Irish political scene for a number of years. He spoke so often about the "Dear old North End" that his supporters there came to be known as "Dearos." Because they were Irish and lived in the North End, Will and Julia and their families undoubtedly came into contact during the 1880s and 1890s with the ubiquitous and indefatigable "Honey Fitz." Rose Fitzgerald, a daughter of "Honey Fitz" who was born in the North End, married a son of "P.J." Kennedy, the Irish political boss of East Boston in those days. In 1960, John F. Kennedy, Rose's son and Honey Fitz's grandson, was elected as the thirty-fifth President of the United States, the first Catholic ever to hold that office. Shortly before his death in 1963, John F. Kennedy acquired a 166-acre country estate in Middleburg, Virginia which he named "Wexford" to commemorate the fact that both sides of his family—the Kennedys and the Fitzgeralds—had come from County Wexford.

In 1850, the Irish comprised about half of the North End's population of 23,000. By 1855, the number of Irish residents had grown to 14,000 out of a total of 26,000. The Irish continued to increase slowly until about 1880; after that their

numbers in the North End began to diminish fairly rapidly with the influx of other nationalities, chiefly the Italians. By 1895 the number of Irish in the North End had dropped to only 6,800. During this period the Kehoes were among those who left the North End. Will's sister Katy had moved out to the Dorchester section of Boston when she married John Nolan. After Katy was widowed by the unexpected early death of her husband, her father Andrew lived with her and her daughter Mary in Dorchester from 1896 onward. When Will and Julia were married in 1898, they moved across the river to live in the Charlestown section of Boston. By the turn of the century, when Johanna went to live with Will and Julia in Charlestown, there were no Kehoes left in the North End.

If you take a walking tour of the North End today, you will find that a good many places have either changed or disappeared in the hundred years or more that have passed since Will's and Julia's families lived there. The gasworks is gone: a parking garage and a public playground now occupy the city block where it once stood. The house across the street from the gasworks where Andy Kehoe and his family first lived (158 Prince Street) is still there, but the house around the corner where Thomas and Johanna Kehoe lived with their family (283 Causeway Street) has been replaced by some stores and a restaurant. The second house where Andy

Kehoe lived (124 Charlestown Street) has been replaced by a modern office building. Walking down Endicott Street, you can still see the house at No. 185 where Will Kehoe boarded for a while when he got out of the Navy, as well as the house at No. 131 where Johanna lived for nearly twenty years. But St. Mary's Church and school are both gone, along with the Irish parishioners who once filled them to capacity. Symbolically, the parish record books for St. Mary's Church are now kept nearby at St. Leonard's, one of the Italian churches of the North End. About the only reminder you can find of the North End's Irish heyday is down at the bottom of Endicott Street, where a massive six-lane overhead expressway—painted green and named after Honey Fitz—runs along the entire length of the western boundary of today's North End. Ironically, Honey Fitz's highway monument is scheduled to disappear during the next decade as part of a traffic improvement and Boston beautification plan.

Chapter 6

Will and Julia: Courtship and Marriage

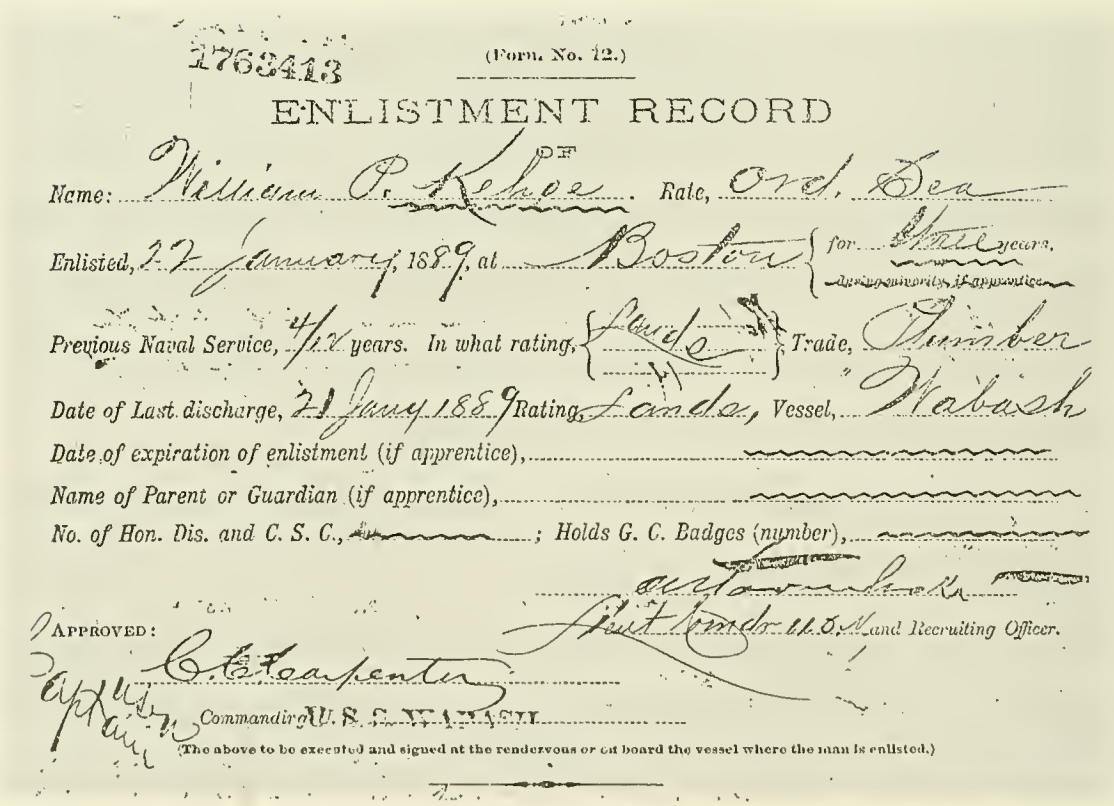
Will Kehoe was almost sixteen years old when he arrived in Boston from Ireland in early May of 1883. Julia at that time was just about to turn fourteen. We do not know how soon they became acquainted, but it was probably not too long after Will's arrival. Their families were living near each other in the same neighborhood and were going to the same Catholic church in the North End of Boston. Very likely the two families had mutual friends among the immigrant Irish community, as well as having had a possible acquaintanceship back in Ireland prior to Julia's parents' moving to America. It seems fair to assume that Will and Julia got to know each other in Boston during the mid-1880s through church, family, and neighborhood contacts of one kind or another.

We have almost no specific information about what Will and Julia were doing during the next five years or so. Undoubtedly they each worked at whatever jobs they could find in order to contribute to the financial support of their struggling families. They would have had a speaking acquaintance and seen each other at church and family functions, but their relationship had not yet developed to the point of their becoming sweethearts. That was to occur a few years later after Will got out of the Navy.

Within a few weeks after his twenty-first birthday, Will enlisted as a sailor in the United States Navy. In those days the age of majority was twenty-one; in order to have enlisted earlier, Will as a minor would have had to get his father's permission. The timing suggests that Will may have wanted to join the Navy earlier, but that Andy, his father, would not agree. As soon as Will was free to do so on his own, he enlisted with very little delay. Although Will had grown up in Bunclody some distance from the ocean, in taking this step he was following in the Wexford seafaring tradition.

What motivated Will, as a young Irish immigrant living in Boston, to enlist in the American Navy? Perhaps he had a close pal in the neighborhood who was joining up and they wanted to go together. Perhaps he was tired of living with his martinet of a father and his four brothers in their dingy

Will Kehoe as a sailor in the U.S. Navy.



1763413

(Form No. 12.)

ENLISTMENT RECORD

OF

Name: William P. Kehoe Rate, Ord. Sea

Enlisted, 22 January, 1889, at Boston { for three years, during minority, if apprentice

Previous Naval Service, 4/12 years. In what rating, Lands Trade, Plumber

Date of Last discharge, 21 Jany 1889 Rating, Lands, Vessel, Wabash

Date of expiration of enlistment (if apprentice), ——

Name of Parent or Guardian (if apprentice), ——

No. of Hon. Dis. and C. S. C., ——; Holds G. C. Badges (number), ——

[illegible]

Lieut Comdr U.S.N. and Recruiting Officer.

APPROVED: C. E. Carpenter

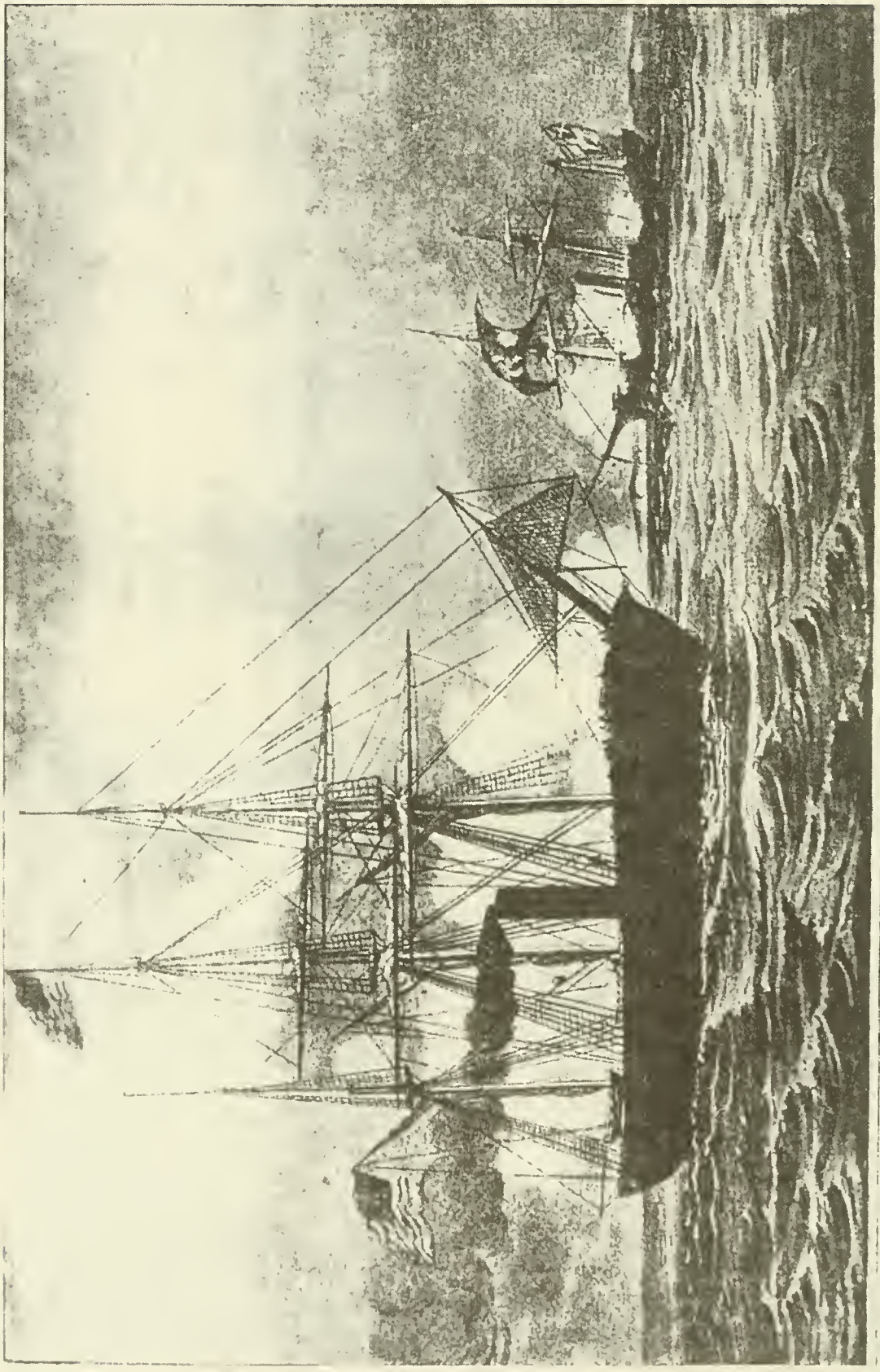
Commanding U. S. S. WABASH

(The above to be executed and signed at the rendezvous or on board the vessel where the man is enlisted.)

lodgings on Prince Street across from the gasworks. Perhaps he looked upon it as a chance to earn some steady pay and learn some new skills. Or perhaps he simply had the classic urge to "join the Navy and see the world." In any event, Will had a model in his older brother, James, the eldest of Andy's seven children, who a year or so earlier had quit his job as a waiter in Boston, said goodbye to his father and brothers, and gone off to seek his fortune in Chicago.

Will enlisted in September, 1888 for a one-year hitch in the Navy. He had been working previously as a plumber, for that is what his enlistment record shows as being his trade. Will apparently found Navy life to his liking, for he was discharged four months later at his own request and simultaneously re-enlisted for a three-year hitch. Will entered the Navy in the lowest enlisted rank of Landsman; that is, someone who knows little or nothing about the sea or seamanship. Four months later upon his re-enlistment, Will had acquired sufficient nautical skills to be promoted to the rank of Ordinary Seaman.

Will served in the Navy for nearly four years from September, 1888 until June, 1892. During that time he hardly saw all of the world, but he did manage to see a good part of it. Most of Will's Navy service was spent aboard the U.S.S. *Kearsarge*, which during that period had its home port on



THE U.S. SLOOP OF WAR 'KEARSARGE' 7 GUNS SINKING THE PIRATE 'ALABAMA' 8 GUNS.
Off Cherbourg France, Sunday June 19th 1864.

the Atlantic coast and was assigned to protecting American interests by cruising in the West Indies, off Venezuela, and along the coast of Central America. Will enjoyed visiting these exotic places, for his Navy service record shows that he was put on report and disciplined a number of times for returning late from liberty ashore.

Duty aboard the *Kearsarge* brought Will, the recent Irish immigrant, into direct contact with American history. The *Kearsarge*, a wooden steam-powered sloop-of-war, was the most famous ship of the Union Navy during the Civil War, having sunk the Confederate raider *Alabama* in a celebrated engagement off Cherbourg, France in 1864. Impressed by this history, Will brought home with him from the Navy a large mounted black-and-white photograph of the *Kearsarge* which he always kept among his personal effects.

Will's Navy service record indicates that he stood five feet seven inches tall and weighed about one hundred forty pounds. He had grey-blue eyes, brown hair, and a ruddy complexion. As befitted a sailor, Will had two tattoos: a star on his left forearm and an anchor shield with his initials "W.K." on his right forearm. He kept these tattoos all his life, for my mother recalled seeing them when she knew Will in his later years.

Given his previous civilian experience working as a plumber, it seems likely that Will was assigned to working on

Will's photograph of the U.S.S. Kearsarge, the ship on which he served during the early 1890s.

the engine and the steam boilers that kept the propeller of the *Kearsarge* turning during his time on board. This in turn would lead to Will's working as a steamfitter for a number of years after getting out of the Navy and to his eventual career as an engineer with the Boston Fire Department.

Periodic evaluations in his Navy service record show Will as receiving generally high marks in various categories such as Seamanship, Gunnery, and Cleanliness. On an ascending scale of 1 to 5, Will got mostly 4s and 5s. Considering the fondness for drinking which he displayed in his later life, Will received surprisingly high marks (4s and 5s) in the category of "Sobriety"; this, however, may have been a largely involuntary accomplishment on Will's part owing to the unavailability of hard liquor to sailors aboard American naval vessels.

The Navy is very likely where Will earned the nickname by which he was to be known all of his later life: "Wild Bill Kehoe." His wildness found expression in a volatile Irish temper which led those who knew him to steer well clear of Will when he was angry. No doubt this trait led to the most serious punishment which Will received during his time in the Navy: five days in the brig on bread and water for hitting another sailor.

Will's weakest category was "Obedience," where he was given a number of 3s and 2s and, on one memorable occasion, the lowest possible rating of "1." Not surprisingly, Will

upon his discharge from the Navy did not receive a Good Conduct Badge. In this distinction he would later be joined by his grandson and namesake, William F. Kehoe, who served as a private in the United States Army during the 1950s and was honorably discharged but without being given the customary, virtually obligatory, Good Conduct Medal. Which suggests that a healthy Irish disrespect for arbitrary authority is a trait which runs in the Kehoe family.

Throughout his life, Will was noted for his formidable capacity for swearing. To his credit he is said to have done his swearing in the presence of other men and only rarely, if ever, when ladies were present. Whatever rudimentary vocabulary of profanity Will brought with him from Wexford would have been amplified and enriched to a level of impressive proficiency by five years of knocking around the streets of the North End followed by four postgraduate years as a sailor in the United States Navy.

When Will left the Navy in June, 1892, he was nearly twenty-five years old. He received discharge pay in the amount of $80.77, plus another $12 in back allotment which he applied for and received the following month. The address on the Treasury Department certificate for the $12 of back allotment shows that Will had returned to the North End and was then living at 166 Prince Street. Still unmarried and living

ÉIRE IRELAND

Uimh. No 037

Deimhniú breithe ar na h-éisiúint de bhun na hAchta um Chlárú Breithcanna agus Básanna 1863 go 1972. Foirm A

BIRTH CERTIFICATE issued in pursuance of Births and Deaths Registration Acts 1863 to 1972 Form A

Breith a Cláraíodh i gCeantar Newtownbarry i gCeantar an Chláraitheora Maoirseachta do Enniscorthy i gContae Wexford Co.
Birth Registered in the District of Newtownbarry in the Superintendent Registrar's District of Enniscorthy in the County of Wexford Co.

Uimh. No. (1)	Dáta agus Ionad Breithe Date and Place of Birth (2)	Ainm (má tugadh) Name (if any) (3)	Gnéas Sex (4)	Ainm Sloinne agus Ionad Chónaithe an Athar Name and Surname and Dwelling Place of Father (5)	Ainm agus Sloinne na Máthar agus a Sloinne roimh phosadh di Name and Surname and Maiden Surname of Mother (6)	Céim nó Gairm Bheatha an Athar Rank or Profession of Father (7)	Síniú, Cáilíocht agus Ionad Chónaithe an Fháisnéiseora Signature, Qualification and Residence of Informant (8)	An Dáta a Cláraíodh When Registered (9)	Síniú an Chláraitheora Signature of Registrar (10)	Ainm Baiste, má tugadh é tar éis Chlárú na Breithe, agus an Dáta Baptismal Name, if added after Registratic of Birth, and Date (11)
84	Fourth August 1867 Market Square Newtownbarry	William	Male	Andrew Kehoe Market Square Newtownbarry	Mary Anne Kehoe Infon Formerly Hickey	Shop Keeper	Andrew Kehoe Father Market Square Newtownbarry	Twenty Eighth August 1867	Richard Carey Cláraitheoir Registrar	

Deimhnítear gur fíor Chóip í seo de thaifead atá i gClár-leabhar na mBreitheanna in Oifig an Ard-Chláraitheora i mBaile Átha Cliath.
Certified to be a true copy taken from the Certified Copies of Births in Oifig an Ard-Chláraitheora, Dublin.

Arna Thabhairt faoi Shéala Oifige an Ard-Chláraitheora an this First lá so de day of February 1978
Given under the Seal of Oifig an Ard-Chláraitheora

Is é Bliain na Breithe sa Chóip deimhnithe thuas ná
The Year of Birth shown in the above Certified Copy is

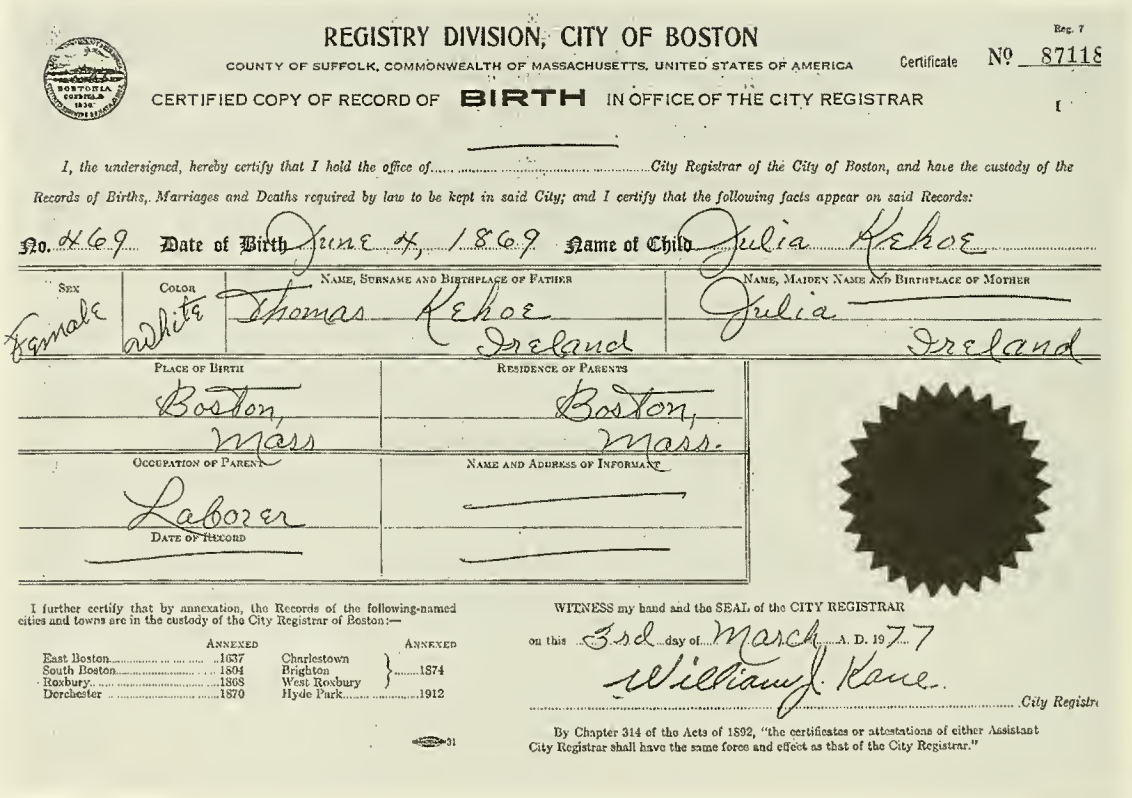
Míle gCéad
One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty Seven

Ath-Scríofa Copied
Scrúdaithe Examined

Is cion trom é an teastas seo a athrú nó é a úsáid taréis a athraithe.

TO ALTER THIS DOCUMENT OR TO UTTER IT SO ALTERED IS A SERIOUS OFFENC

Certificate of Will's birth in 1867 in Bunclody (then called Newtownbarry).



REGISTRY DIVISION, CITY OF BOSTON

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK, COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Reg. 7

Certificate No. 87118

CERTIFIED COPY OF RECORD OF **BIRTH** IN OFFICE OF THE CITY REGISTRAR

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that I hold the office of ..... City Registrar of the City of Boston, and have the custody of the Records of Births, Marriages and Deaths required by law to be kept in said City; and I certify that the following facts appear on said Records:

No. 469 Date of Birth June 4, 1869 Name of Child Julia Kehoe

Sex	Color	Name, Surname and Birthplace of Father	Name, Maiden Name and Birthplace of Mother
Female	white	Thomas Kehoe Ireland	Julia Ireland

Place of Birth	Residence of Parents
Boston, Mass	Boston, Mass.

Occupation of Parent: Laborer

Name and Address of Informant:

Date of Record:

I further certify that by annexation, the Records of the following-named cities and towns are in the custody of the City Registrar of Boston:—

	Annexed		Annexed
East Boston	1637	Charlestown	1874
South Boston	1804	Brighton	
Roxbury	1868	West Roxbury	
Dorchester	1870	Hyde Park	1912

31

WITNESS my hand and the SEAL of the CITY REGISTRAR on this 3rd day of March A. D. 1977

William J. Kane

..... City Registrar

By Chapter 314 of the Acts of 1892, "the certificates or attestations of either Assistant City Registrar shall have the same force and effect as that of the City Registrar."

Certificate of Julia's birth in 1869 in Boston. Her mother's name was Johanna, not Julia.

nearby with her mother in the same North End neighborhood was Julia, who had just passed her twenty-third birthday.

During the next five years, Will worked at various jobs around Boston as a steamfitter. Once again asserting his independence, he did not go back to living with his father and his brothers, but found lodgings of his own at various addresses in the North End and across the river in Charlestown. Having matured into young manhood after sowing some wild oats in the Navy, Will now began his courtship of Julia and his search for a permanent job, both with the intention of settling down in life.

Will and Julia were certainly seeing each other within a few months after his getting out of the Navy and returning to the North End. In November of 1892 Will attended a social gathering at Julia's home, where he was asked by Julia's younger sister, Alice, to write an inscription in her autograph book:

To Allie Nov. 12, 1892

Alice Kehoe is your name
Single is your station
Happy will the young man be
That makes the alteration.

Your Friend,
"Porthos"
W.P.K.

On the same date one of Will's pals who was at the party—possibly a beau of Alice's—wrote on another page of her autograph book:

To Alice Nov. 12, 1892

Kehoe Dooley and all the rest
They have all written here
Now Alice dear I do my best
To prove that I am sincere.

J.F.J. Nichols
"Athos"

Earlier that year, on the page opposite Will's inscription, Julia had written:

Sister January 3, 1892

May your path in life be pleasant
Strewn with flowers of every hue.
May your joy be pure and constant
And your friends forever true.

Your Sister
Julia

All these kind wishes notwithstanding, not very many months later Alice was dead. Her death in May, 1893 meant that Johanna, a widow in her fifties, now had only her daughter Julia living at home with her. Johanna's two sons had both died previously. Johanna's oldest daughter, Mary, had moved out in 1877 a couple of weeks before her fourteenth birthday to marry a man named Robert McDowell; now Mary had a large and growing family of her own. Julia, who had a job making paper boxes at the newly-opened Davis Box Factory on Washington Street, Boston, was her mother's sole source of support, both psychological and financial.

Enter Will Kehoe as an actor on the scene. By July, 1893 he had moved to a boarding house at No. 185 Endicott Street, scarcely more than a block up on the same side of Endicott Street from where Julia and Johanna were living at No. 131. Will had by then taken the Civil Service examination for the Boston Fire Department and had passed with a respectable grade of 83.49. He was now on the eligible list for the fire department, but would have to bide his time until a job came open which he could hope to obtain through the exercise of political "pull."

In October of 1893, Will was working in Plymouth, New Hampshire on a steamfitting job. During this period he and Julia were corresponding regularly. One of Will's letters to Julia survives today:

Plymouth N.H.
Oct. 15th, 93

Dear Julia:

I received your letter all right and I shall not forget you for your promptness in answering. My object was to write you about Thursday as we were expecting to be home about Saturday, but we were delayed 3 days waiting for material so that puts us back. I cut a half round of flesh off my forefinger of the right hand which accounts for that postal card and also this poor writing, which I trust you will be kind enough to overlook.

Speaking of giving you bad habits Julia, it does not appeal very highly to my sense of gratitude, for if any person in the world has a right to be your friend it is me, for whatever good habits I have I can sincerely thank you for them and I do from the bottom of my heart. I also hope you will never learn a worse habit from me than looking for a letter from me, for though my letters may not interest you any, I assure you that the letters I receive from you are a source of keen enjoyment to me.

It is too bad about Mrs. Murphy's boy, but he will not miss one finger so much. It is lucky it is no worse.

I am sorry to disappoint Katie McCaffery, but I am twice as sorry for myself for I hugged myself with the fond hope that I would be down there tonight to claim my "welcome" from you. I tell you

the Country is a mighty fine [place] to live in for some people but with all its charms I am anxious to see the girl "I left behind."

I have cut your "Friendship Cane" on the top of Mount Plymouth, and trimmed it. It looks nice, as anything belonging to you does.

I sent them chickens Thursday morning. I hope you received them O.K.

I have not the least idea when I will be coming home for things is a little mixed up here at present, but I hope it will not be later than Thursday. Please answer early as I would like to let you know when to expect me.

Give my regards to all the fellows and girls and also your Mother. I hope you have a nice time at George's but in all your pleasure don't forget a stray thought for your friend in "Exile."

Hoping I will see you soon, I remain

Your Friend
Will

Will mailed this letter in an envelope addressed to Julia in care of the Davis Box Factory, her place of work at 57 Washington Street, Boston. Why didn't Will mail his letter to Julia's home address? The explanation seems to be, in order to keep Julia's mother from knowing about their correspondence. There were ample reasons why Will's courtship of

Julia would have met with a cool initial reaction from her mother. Here was a tattooed ex-sailor known as "Wild Bill," with a reputation for drinking, fighting, and swearing and no established career or steady job. To the pious, conservative Johanna, what kind of match would this fellow be for her one remaining unmarried daughter? To be sure, he was likable and good-looking, charming and polite in company, and came of a good family from the old country. Nevertheless, Will Kehoe could hardly expect at the outset to find himself anywhere near the top of Johanna's list of prospective husbands for her daughter Julia.

Over the next several years Will persisted in his courtship of Julia (and her mother). He continued working as a steamfitter and pursued the possibility of getting an appointment to the fire department. By the beginning of 1897, Will and Julia had become engaged to be married. From Montreal the much-traveled Will sent Julia a gift with an affectionate note which she was to keep for the rest of her life:

> To Julia from Will
>
> Montreal, Jan 18/97
>
> With best wishes for your future happiness, and hoping it may remind you of one who though absent, loves you none the less devotedly.

"Dear Julia if my pen could write
The love my heart doth feel
I would say in words both bold and bright
That I would love you through woe or weal
And if by chance the day should come
With another by your side
I hope you'll think of him who changed
His whole life at your tender smile."

To my promised Wife these few lines
are affectionately dedicated

Your Absent Sweetheart
Will

A few months later in June of 1897, Will received his long-awaited appointment to the Boston Fire Department. The appointment was initially a probationary one as a "permanent substitute" with Engine 23 at 82 Northampton Street. After successfully completing his probationary period, Will became a full-fledged hoseman with Engine 27 in Charlestown in May of the following year. According to his Boston Fire Department service record and photograph, Will at the age of thirty had grown a mustache and had gained about fifteen pounds since joining the Navy at the age of twenty-one.

In Boston Irish political parlance, Will had "died and

Will and Julia Kehoe at the time of their marriage in 1898.

gone to heaven": he now had a civil service job for life with a regular paycheck and a pension when he retired. As long as he showed up and did his job, Will would not have to worry from one week to the next about where he was going to find the rent money or the food money. He and Julia could now set their wedding date.

On November 23, 1898, Will and Julia were married at her parish church, St. Mary's on Cooper Street in the North End. They made an attractive couple, comfortable together and obviously very fond of each other. Shortly afterwards, Will and Julia moved into a house at 24 Mystic Street in the increasingly Irish section of Charlestown across the river from the North End. Here they would live and raise a family of five children over the course of the next thirty years.

Were Will and Julia, who had the same last name, related to each other by blood? Family tradition has it that Will and Julia "had mutual cousins" but were not otherwise related. Certainly Father Holland, the Jesuit priest at St. Mary's Church who married them, would have brought this question up. Had Will and Julia been first or second cousins to each other, they would have been required by church law to obtain a dispensation on account of consanguinity and the fact of the dispensation would have been noted in both parish and archdiocesan records. Those records show that, a

few years before, John F. ("Honey Fitz") Fitzgerald, the political boss of the North End, had obtained such a dispensation when he married a woman who was his second cousin. But there is no notation of Will and Julia's having been granted such a dispensation, either in the St. Mary's parish record of their marriage or in the archdiocesan book where all such dispensations were required to be recorded. Thus the negative evidence of the written record bears out the family tradition that Will and Julia were not closely related.

REGISTRY DIVISION, CITY OF BOSTON

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK, COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CERTIFIED COPY OF RECORD OF **MARRIAGE** IN OFFICE OF THE CITY REGISTRAR

Certificate Nº 0115 J

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that I hold the office of ..... City Registrar of the City of Boston, and have cust the Records of Births, Marriages and Deaths required by law to be kept in said City; and I certify that the following facts appear on said Rec

No. 5388 Date of Marriage November 23 1898 Place of Marriage Boston MA

Name and Surname of Groom and Bride	Residence of Each at Time of Marriage	Age	Color	Number of Marriage (Wid. or Div.)	Occupation
William P Kehoe	Boston MA	30	White	First	Fireman
Julia V Kehoe	Boston MA	28	White	First	Box Maker

Place of Birth of Each	Names of Parents (Maiden Name of Mother)
Ireland	Andrew J Kehoe - Mary Hickey
Boston MA	Thomas Kehoe - Johanna Dooley

Name, Residence and Official Position of the Person who Solemnized the Marriage	Date of Record
F J Holland S J Priest	November 25 1898
Boston MA	----------

I further certify that by annexation, the Records of the following-named cities and towns are in the custody of the City Registrar of Boston:—

	Annexed		Annexed
East Boston	1637	Charlestown	1874
South Boston	1804	Brighton / West Roxbury	
Roxbury	1868	Hyde Park	1912
Dorchester	1870		

Date of Amendment _____

WITNESS my hand and the SEAL of the CITY REGISTRAR

on this Day of JUL 13 1899 A.D. 19

Judith A. McCarthy

City Re

By Chapter 314 of Acts of 1892, "the certificates or attestations of either Assistant City Registrar shall have the same force and effect as that of the City Registrar."

Certificate of Will and Julia's marriage in 1898.

Chapter 7

Will and Julia: Raising A Family

Five children were born to Will and Julia at their home in Charlestown on the following dates:

Alice	September 1, 1899
Catherine	March 16, 1901
William	January 1, 1903
Frederick	June 20, 1906
Arthur	August 18, 1908

Will and Julia and their children were not given middle names at birth. As the custom then was, they took middle names of their own choosing at confirmation.

Central in the life of Will and Julia's growing family was St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church. Located on the crest of Bunker Hill Street just a few blocks up from where the Kehoes

St. Francis de Sales Church, Charlestown.

St. Francis de Sales School, Charlestown.

lived on Mystic Street, St. Francis' Church dominated the Charlestown landscape with its graceful spire. Here Will and Julia's children were baptized, received their first communion, and were confirmed. Diagonally across and down the street from the church was St. Francis de Sales Parochial School, an imposing red brick building where Will and Julia's children attended grammar school under the tutelage of the nuns.

Like the North End, Charlestown is a neighborhood where Boston's historical past is very much in evidence. Here the Battle of Bunker Hill was fought at the beginning of the American Revolution. Prominent among Boston's landmarks is the towering granite obelisk of the Bunker Hill Monument in Charlestown. Each year on June 17th, the Kehoes and their neighbors in Charlestown would join enthusiastically in the celebration of Bunker Hill Day, a holiday marked by fireworks, parades, and patriotic festivities. The fact that the historic enemy had been the hated English made it that much easier for the Irish of Charlestown to adopt the holiday as their own. I can remember as a child growing up in Medford, how my father, Bill Kehoe, would take our family back to his old neighborhood in Charlestown on "the night before the 17th" to watch the huge bonfire which traditionally opened the Bunker Hill Day festivities.

Will and Julia are both remembered as being likable,

sociable, down-to-earth individuals. Their home was a pleasant, lively place where guests felt welcome and enjoyed themselves. Will in particular is remembered for his warm, friendly personality, his happy-go-lucky outlook on life, his Irish wit and sense of humor. Mary Nolan recalled her "Uncle Bill" (as she called him) coming into the house and calling out cheerily to his wife, "Jewel!" (his nickname for Julia). As a child, Mary Nolan loved to visit her Kehoe cousins in Charlestown because her own upbringing was quite strict, whereas the Kehoes were a much freer, more relaxed family. Mary recalled Julia's aunt, Sarah Dooley Richmond, as being very neat and precise and as always wearing a freshly starched apron; Mary contrasted Sarah's fastidiousness with Julia's much more easy-going ways.

In those days before television, the Kehoes entertained themselves and each other with traditional pastimes such as conversation, reading, singing songs around the piano, and playing cards. Will and his sons played a lot of cribbage, whereas Julia was an avid whist player. All of the Kehoes liked to read, especially Will, who had an Irish fondness for words and the meaning of words that led him to develop an impressive vocabulary. At the family dinner table, Will would try to stump the children, especially Bill or Kathryn, with some new word he'd learned; they would try in turn to correct Will

Where the Kehoes lived at 24 Mystic Street, Charlestown.

PLEASE PRESERVE THIS BILL AND PRESENT IT WHEN REGISTERING AS A VOTER.

"A poll tax shall be assessed, in the manner hereinafter provided, on every male inhabitant of the Commonwealth above the age of twenty years, whether a citizen of the United States or an alien."—[*Public Statutes, Chapter 11, Section 1.*

X
137 CITY OF BOSTON. Ward 3.

William T. Kehoe Voting Precinct 2

24 Mystic St

YOUR STATE AND COUNTY TAX
IS NOW DUE.

Poll Tax for State Purposes	$1.00	
" " County "	1.00	$2.00
Costs		
Interest		

1900

CITY COLLECTOR'S OFFICE OCT 27 1901 CASHIER

Received Payment,

OCTOBER 1, 1900. Deputy City Collector.

A SUMMONS will be issued to each person whose tax remains unpaid at an additional cost of twenty cents.

COLLECTOR'S OFFICE, CITY HALL, Hours: 9 A.M. to 2 P.M.

Will's poll tax bill for the year 1900.

or to stump him with some other word. All of the Kehoes shared a traditional Irish appreciation for aptness and facility of verbal expression: a good simile, a well-turned phrase, a neat rhyme, an appropriate nickname. Satirizing his youngest son Arthur's aversion to helping with work around the house and Arthur's fondness for sleeping instead, Will dubbed him "Fainting Phil," after an easily-defeated prizefighter of the day.

Will's Irish sense of humor was tickled by Calvin Coolidge, the deadpan, small-minded New England Yankee who served as President of the United States during the mid-1920s. My father recalled Will listening to Coolidge on one of the early radio sets and chuckling over the absurdity of Cal's reciting a figure of many millions of dollars for the Federal budget and then adding punctiliously, "And thirty-nine cents."

Kidding and joking around constituted a favorite activity of Arthur, Fred, Bill, and Kathryn. (Their older sister Alice, being more demure and sedate, preferred not to join in the verbal rough-housing of her siblings.) This predilection was inherited from their father, Will, who was a considerable kidder and joker all his life. Will would typically say, after eating a large dinner, "That was a good snack. Many a man would make a meal of it!" This in an effort to "get a rise" out of his wife, Julia.

Will's rough and rowdy ways did not daunt Julia, who

was a feisty person in her own right. On one occasion, Will and two of his Fire Department pals, Galvin and Murphy, were sitting around in the Kehoes' house drinking. The more Galvin and Murphy drank, the quieter they became; the more Will drank, the louder he became. Will and his pals had a record of a new popular song—"You're Like A Mother To Me" —which they kept playing on the phonograph over and over again. Finally Julia broke up the party by marching in, taking off the record, and smashing it to pieces.

In the presence of his older sister Katy, with her gracious-but-strict convent-bred manner, Will always acted the part of the perfect gentleman. Will respected and deferred to Katy, who had been for him the lady of the family ever since their mother had died in Bunclody when he was only six years old. Whatever Katy said was law to Will. As Paul Mirto, who knew Will in his later years, put it, "When Katy was around, Wild Bill became Sweet William."

His Navy and Fire Department pals called him "Bill" or "Wild Bill." In their later years, Julia called him "Pa." His sister Katy, however, always called him by his old-country nickname of "Will."

After working for four years on the Boston Fire Department, Will received his first promotion in December, 1901. He went from being a Hoseman on Engine 27 to being

an Assistant Engineer on Engine 10. Will's achievement was noted in a news item in one of the Boston newspapers ("FIREMAN KEHOE PROMOTED") along with a photograph of Will wearing his fireman's coat and hat. The newspaper story reported that "Fireman Kehoe is popular among his mates" and that "his promotion is said to come as the reward for many brave acts performed by him at big fires." Will's promotion to Assistant Engineer in 1901 was followed by his promotion to Engineer in 1912. As an engineer on the fire department, Will was using his previous knowledge of plumbing and steamfitting, working on maintaining and repairing the large steam boilers which were a prominent feature of the horse-drawn fire apparatus of the day.

A good part of the time Will and his pals sat around the firehouse playing cribbage. But when the alarm sounded for a fire, the job could turn into a dangerous one. Every year numbers of Boston firemen were killed or injured in the line of duty. Will's Boston Fire Department record shows that he was injured a number of times while fighting fires, seriously enough to be out of work for several weeks or even several months afterwards. On one occasion, Will was struck in the heel by a hydrant pick; on other occasions, he suffered a fractured rib, a fractured thumb, a shoulder injury, and several foot injuries.

Will's most serious injuries came at a fire on New Year's

Day of 1919, where he sustained multiple contusions as well as injuries to his knee and ankle which kept him laid up for nearly three months. Thus it happened that Will missed the Great Boston Molasses Flood, a famous and bizarre disaster which occurred in the North End on January 15, 1919 when a giant tank holding 2.5 million gallons of molasses gave way and flooded Commercial Street and several adjacent blocks with a thick, sticky swamp of molasses in which twenty-one persons and numbers of horses were drowned. The scene of the disaster was near the old North End neighborhood of the Kehoes and just a short distance from the firehouse on Salem Street where Will was stationed at that time. Firemen and policemen took part in the initial rescue effort, as well as in the subsequent cleanup operation which continued for months. When Will returned to work in late March of 1919, he was very likely involved in the effort to remove the last of the sticky mess from the cobblestone streets of the North End with high pressure hoses spraying salt water pumped out of the adjacent Boston Harbor.

For nearly twenty years, from 1902 through 1921, Will was assigned to Engine No. 8 at 127 Salem Street in the North End of Boston, just a couple of blocks down Salem Street from the Old North Church. A photograph from this period shows Will and his fellow firemen in their uniforms, standing

Will Keboe (with mustache) and fellow firemen outside firehouse on Salem Street, North End, Boston, during the early 1900s.

in front of their horse-drawn apparatus in the street outside the firehouse. The faces of the firemen are Irish, but the neighborhood has become Italian: in the photograph to the left of the firehouse you can see an Italian barber shop, to the right an Italian fruit and vegetable stand.

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, Will was fifty years old and over age for military service. His three sons, on the other hand, were too young to be drafted, Bill, the oldest, being then only fourteen. However, Will did his patriotic best for the war effort. His fire department record shows that in April, 1918 Will voluntarily participated in a Liberty Loan parade on one of his days off.

During the year 1920, two amendments to the United States Constitution took effect which had a direct impact on the respective lives of Will and Julia.

Effective on January 16, 1920, the Eighteenth Amendment imposed on Americans "The Noble Experiment" whereby the manufacture, transportation, and sale of alcoholic beverages were forbidden by Federal law. The evening before Prohibition took effect was known as "John Barleycorn's Wake" from the numerous drinking parties that were held to mourn the demise of Demon Rum. One or more of these parties were dutifully attended by Will, who is said to have come home that night in appropriately high spirits lugging a large

suitcase filled with bottles of liquor to tide him over the long dry spell that lay ahead.

Later in the year 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment extended the vote to American women. For Julia, who was then over fifty years old, this meant that she would now be able to vote for the first time. Although Julia was a native-born American citizen and her husband was a naturalized alien, for the previous several decades only Will, as a male, had been eligible to vote.

According to his annual City of Boston poll tax bills for the thirty years during which he and Julia lived in Charlestown, Will regularly paid his poll tax and voted in elections. As a city employee, Will no doubt also paid informal "taxes" by way of periodic campaign contributions to the political machine. Despite the existence of the civil service system, such contributions would have been a routine prerequisite to Will's being sure of keeping his job on the Boston Fire Department.

From the time he joined the Boston Fire Department in 1897, Will was a paid-up member in good standing of the Boston Firemen's Mutual Benevolent Association. Several times a year Will paid assessments which were used by the association to provide death benefits for families of firemen who had died. Over the years Will carefully saved all of his receipts for

these payments in a blue metal tobacco box labeled "Mayo's Cut Plug." When Will died, Julia as his widow received from the association a death benefit of several thousand dollars.

Will made new friends among his fellow firemen, but he also kept in touch with old pals from the Navy. From time to time, Will would receive a post card in the mail showing a scene from some exotic port in South or Central America. Sometimes Will's Navy pals sent pictures of themselves: rakish, mustachioed men in Navy blues or whites, looking self-assured and worldly wise, posing in pictures with the name of some photo studio in Key West, Montevideo, or Buenos Aires at the bottom. One of these old salts, T.D. Rhodes, would visit Will from time to time when his ship was docked in Boston or Portsmouth. Eventually Rhodes retired to Blue Hill, Maine, where Will took a trip to visit him during the early 1930s following his own retirement. On one occasion while he was still in the Navy, Rhodes wrote an undated note to Will from the U.S.S. Wheeling, a gunboat on which he was then serving in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic:

> "Friend Billy:
>
> Give my regards to your wife and family and accept the same yourself. I am going to send you two of our blue shirts. Let me know what collar you wear. I am not going to leave this ship—nothing doing."

Enclosed were several picture postcards of scenes in Santo Domingo with brief explanatory comments by Rhodes:

> "This is very pretty and it was on this road the president was shot."
>
> "This is where we go to get our cold beer."
>
> "This is the temple in which Columbus's bones is buried. I have put a pencil mark so as you can find it."

Among Will's Boston acquaintances was a former U.S. Navy man and fellow Irishman named Paul H. Kendricken. A good deal older than Will, Kendricken was roughly a contemporary of Will's father, Andy, and Julia's father, Thomas. Born in County Galway in 1834, Kendricken had immigrated to Boston as a poor Irish boy in the early 1840s. By dint of native ability and hard work, Kendricken succeeded in advancing himself to a position of considerable prominence and affluence in the Boston community. By attending night school he learned enough about engineering and draftsmanship to obtain a commission as an officer in the Union Navy, where he saw extensive combat service against the Confederates during the Civil War. After the war, Kendricken established a successful company in Boston known as Ingalls & Kendricken which manufactured steam boilers and heating

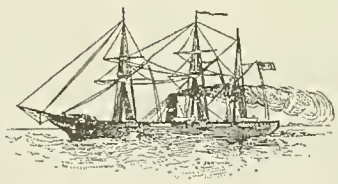
equipment. As a respected businessman, Kendricken found himself elected several times to political office, serving during the late 1800s as an alderman, city councillor, and state senator. Will Kehoe would have become friends with Kendricken either through their mutual involvement in the plumbing and steamfitting business or through Kendricken's acting as Commodore of the Kearsarge Association of Naval Veterans, an organization named after the ship on which Will had served during his time in the Navy. Will's outgoing personality, his skill with tools, his Irish origin, and his Navy background would have all appealed to the older Kendricken. Very possibly Will worked at some point as a steamfitter for Kendricken's company. Very possibly Kendricken used his political influence to help Will get his job on the Boston Fire Department. In any event, their friendship is memorialized in a copy of Kendricken's privately printed *Memoirs* which he gave to Will in 1910 with a personal inscription on the flyleaf: "Wm. P. Kehoe Esq. It affords me great pleasure to present you with a copy of my 'Memoirs.' I remain Very truly, Paul H. Kendricken."

In those days before Social Security pensions and nursing homes for the aged, grown sons and daughters cared for their elderly parents in their homes as a matter of family responsibility. Thus Johanna moved in with her daughter

Wm T. Kehoe Esq.
It affords me great
pleasure to present you
with a Copy of My "Memoirs."
I remain very Truly
Paul H. Kendricken.

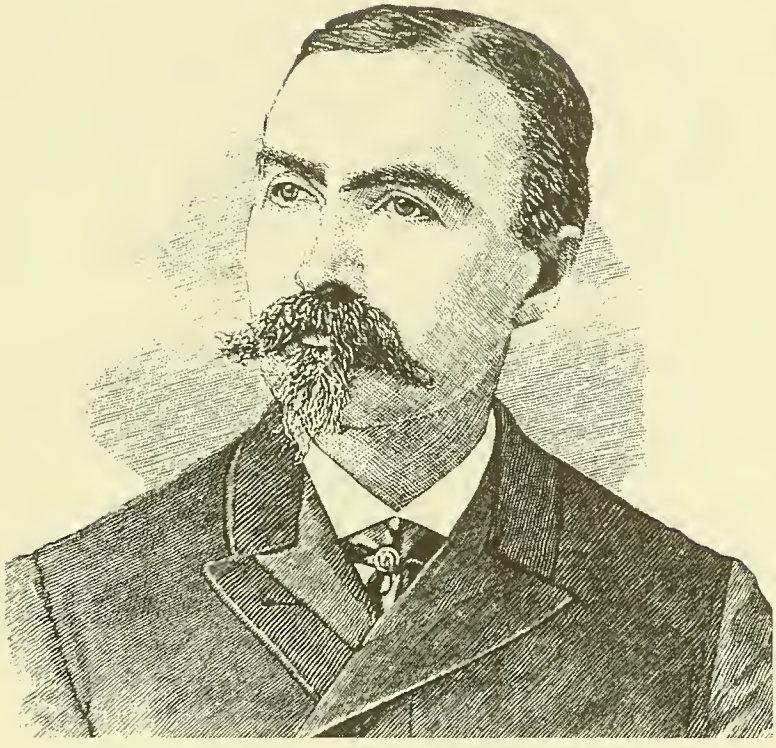
Memoirs of

Paul Henry Kendricken



Boston
Privately Printed
1910

Copy of Paul Kendricken's Memoirs inscribed to Will Kehoe.



Will's friend, Paul H. Kendricken:
Irish immigrant, U.S. Navy veteran,
successful Boston businessman.

INGALLS & KENDRICKEN,

MANUFACTURERS OF

STEAM-HEATING

APPARATUS.

OFFICE AND MANUFACTORY,

80 & 82 SUDBURY STREET,

(CODMAN BUILDING), BOSTON.

Julia and her husband Will shortly after they set up housekeeping in Charlestown, remaining in her daughter's home until her death in 1916. Similarly, Andy moved into his widowed daughter Katy's house in Dorchester in the mid-1890s, remaining there until his death in 1914.

Beginning about the time of the First World War, a major improvement took place in Will and Julia's economic situation. One by one, their five children graduated from public high school and went to work. The oldest, the two girls, found jobs in Boston as secretaries, Alice at the Packard Motor Company and Kathryn in a law firm. At the beginning of 1920s Will and Julia's oldest son, Bill, graduated from the High School of Commerce and began working as a stenographer at the Boston travel office of the United Fruit Company, booking passenger trips (and eventually traveling himself) to many of the same Caribbean and Central American ports that Will, his father, had seen as a sailor some three decades before. Fred, the next oldest son, went to work as an electrician after having learned that trade in a high school cooperative program. Arthur, the youngest, worked for a while at an assistant clerk's job which Bill got him at one of the United Fruit Company wharves, later picking up a working knowledge of the electrician's trade via Fred's instruction. What this meant was that Will and Julia, after twenty years of raising

five dependent children on a fireman's pay, now had an increasing amount of financial support coming in from five unmarried adult children who would continue to live at home with them throughout the decade of the 1920s. Fred and Bill did not leave home to get married until 1931 and 1932 respectively; even then, Will and Julia for the rest of their lives would have the other three children still living unmarried at home and contributing to the financial support of the household.

The new prosperity of the Kehoes was reflected in a number of ways. In the year 1919, they had a telephone installed in their home for the first time. They bought an automobile, a Ford touring car which Will learned (after a fashion) to drive. During the early 1920s, the Kehoes began renting a country cottage out in East Malden where they would move for several months each summer. And in 1923 they bought a piece of land on the same hillside in East Malden, a piece of land which was to be the site of their future summer home. According to the Federal documentary stamp on the deed to Will and Julia from Loomis D. Griswold, Trustee of the L.D. Griswold Land Co., the price which they paid for the land was $500. Finally, in the late 1920s after Will's retirement from the Boston Fire Department, the Kehoes moved out of Charlestown to the

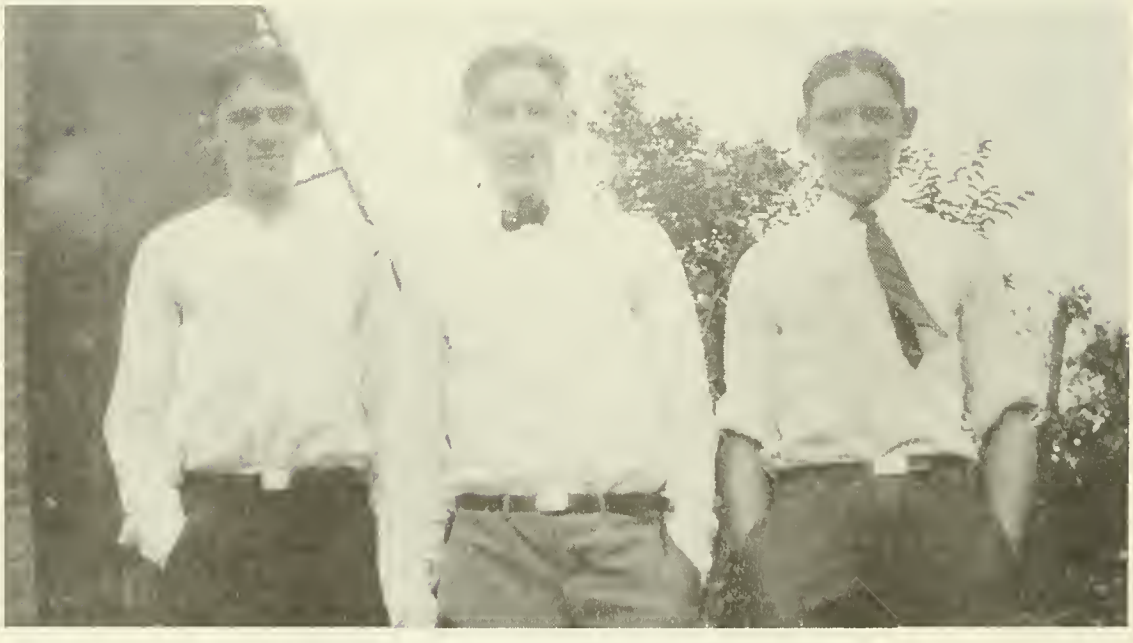
Frederick L. Kehoe

Arthur T. Kehoe

William A. Kehoe

William A. Kehoe (left) in the United Fruit Company office, Boston, during the 1920s.

Will and Julia's daughters: Alice (left) and Kathryn.



Will and Julia's sons: Fred (left), Bill, and Arthur.

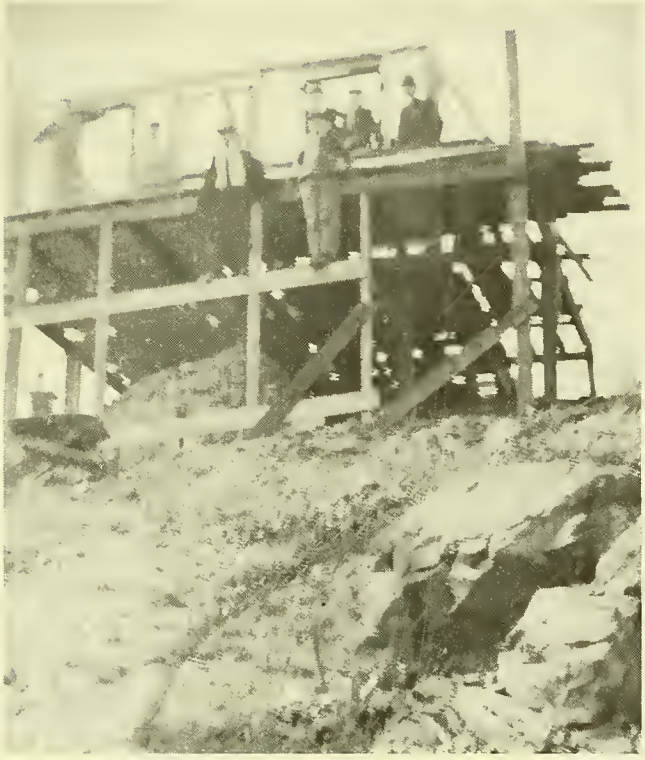
Will and Julia in the 1920s.

Alice Kehoe (left) and Kathryn Kehoe.

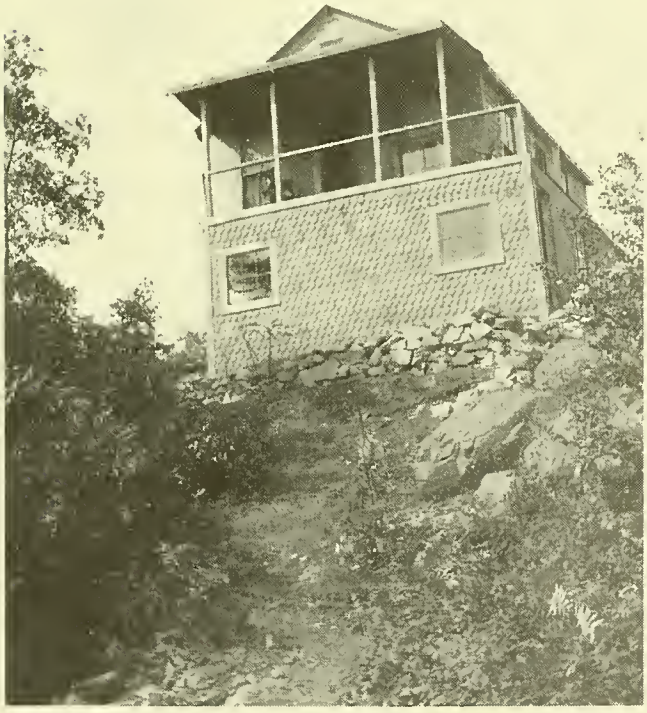
more desirable suburban neighborhood of West Somerville.

Why did Will and Julia choose East Malden as the location for their summer place? For one thing, it had the advantage in those days of being a good deal more wooded and rural than it is today, while being readily accessible from Boston by street car. It was also close to Holy Cross Cemetery in East Malden, where Julia's mother and father and Will's father had all been buried. Very likely Will and Julia first became familiar with the East Malden area from visiting their family graves at Holy Cross Cemetery.

Will built the family's summer cottage on Blue Hill Avenue, Malden by himself. More accurately, he built it with the assistance of a pal of his named Galvin from the Boston Fire Department. The Kehoes and the Galvins bought lots across from each other; Will helped Galvin build his cottage and Galvin helped Will build his. The Kehoes' cottage had one large central room with a kitchen and two bedrooms on the inside, plus an open porch on the outside. Because it was intended only for summer use, the cottage had no central heating. A few years later the Kehoes bought an adjacent lot on which Will built a garage with the assistance of his sons, Galvin, and some other neighbors. As a tribute to Will's workmanship, the cottage still stands today; however, its appearance is rather different as a result of its having been winterized and



The summer cottage that Will built on "Vinegar Hill," East Malden, Massachusetts.



remodeled into a year-round home by subsequent owners.

Modest though it was, the summer camp in East Malden represented a very significant step for the Kehoes as a family. After centuries of being tenants, both in Ireland and in America, the Kehoes for the first time owned a piece of land and a house of their own. The Kehoes of Charlestown now owned a vacation home in the country! For Will and Julia and their children, this was a realization of the American dream which had led Thomas, Johanna, and Andy to leave Ireland so many years before. The realization of this dream would be carried on into the future as Will and Julia's sons Fred and Bill and their children after them became the owners of homes of their own.

John F. Kennedy would later call his country estate "Wexford." Will Kehoe, ironically echoing Wexford history, dubbed his more modest country place "Vinegar Hill."

The Kehoes' camp in Malden had family significance in a second major way. Each year the Kehoes would move out to Malden at the end of May and move back to Charlestown at the end of September. This contact with Malden led to both Fred and Bill Kehoe meeting their future wives. Fred met and eventually married Adeline Caggiano, a young woman who taught piano and whose family lived nearby in East Malden; after Fred and Adeline were married, they were to live for a

number of years on Bowman Street in East Malden, just a few blocks from the Kehoes' summer camp. A Malden friend and neighbor of the Kehoes, George Grover, worked in Kotzen's Furniture Store in Malden Square; Bill Kehoe met his future wife, Josephine Crowley, a young woman from Malden who worked with George Grover, when George arranged for Bill to escort her on June 10, 1925 to a piano recital of Adeline's.

Building the camp gave Will a chance to use his skill with tools, a talent which he'd inherited from his father Andy. Will did all the carpentry on the cottage as well as installing all the plumbing. Those who knew him said that Will could make just about anything. He would sit down and study a problem out, then go ahead when he'd gotten the hang of it. Will once made a table for the camp in Malden out of an old upright piano—a piece of ingenuity which was much admired by those who viewed the table. Among my tools today I am glad to have an old twelve-inch steel carpenter's rule of my grandfather's on which he stamped his initials "W.P.K."

America in the 1920s was rapidly becoming motorized. Horse-drawn vehicles were being supplanted by gasoline-powered cars and trucks. In keeping with this trend, the Boston Fire Department decided in 1927 to replace its horse-drawn fire engines with motorized vehicles. In his later years Will had been driving the horse-drawn fire engines. He had

Name William P. Kehoe Badge Number 96

Address 14 [illegible] 2 Height 5-7½ Weight 157

Date appointed June 4, 1897. Civil Service per cent. 83.74

When born Aug 4, 1868. Date of leaving service Nov. 11, 1927

Where born Co. Wexford, Ire. Cause Retired

Single, Married Married Remarks Died Nov. 30, 1934.

Previous Occupation Steamfitter

Assigned E. 23 Date June 4/97. E. 32 Jan.23,1925

Transfers E. 27 " May 27/98.

E. 10 " Dec. 20/01. Died Nov 30 1934

E. 8 " Dec. 5/02.

E. 27 " Feb. 2/12. Promotions Asst.Eng. Dec.20/01.

E. 8 " Nov. 8/12. Engineer Nov. 8/12.

E. 32 " Oct. 28/21. Appar. Oper. June 3/27

E. 53 " Dec. 7/23

Will's Boston Fire Department employment record.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
Registry of Motor Vehicles
Commonwealth Pier
Boston Mass.

RENEWAL LICENSE TO OPERATE MOTOR VEHICLES JUN 4 1929 No. 332720

Date

Authorized Change in Date

William P. Kehoe,
25 Bromfield Rd.,
Somerville, Mass.

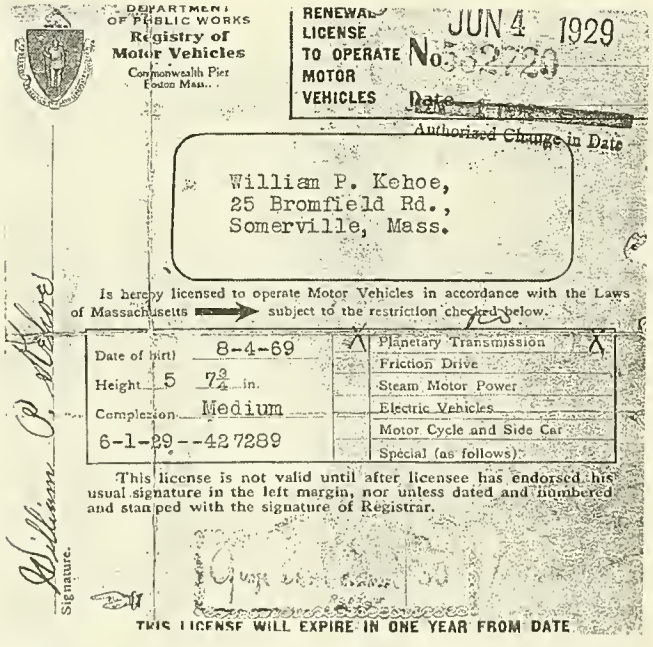
Is hereby licensed to operate Motor Vehicles in accordance with the Laws of Massachusetts → subject to the restriction checked below.

Date of birth 8-4-69	X	Planetary Transmission X
Height 5 7¾ in.		Friction Drive
Complexion Medium		Steam Motor Power
6-1-29--427289		Electric Vehicles
		Motor Cycle and Side Car
		Special (as follows)

This license is not valid until after licensee has endorsed his usual signature in the left margin, nor unless dated and numbered and stamped with the signature of Registrar.

William P. Kehoe
Signature.

THIS LICENSE WILL EXPIRE IN ONE YEAR FROM DATE



Will's driver's license, 1929. His signature appears along the left hand side.

also obtained a license to drive an automobile, although he was not especially adept at it; from all reports, riding in a car with Will at the wheel was an exciting, if sometimes terrifying, experience. When he was promoted to the position of Apparatus Operator in June of 1927, Will wisely chose not to tackle the newfangled machines. After thirty years of service, Will retired from the Boston Fire Department in November, 1927 at the age of sixty. He received a pension of $1,050 per year.

What became of Will's five brothers who had come to America with him back in the early 1880s? The fact is that Will outlived them all.

Andrew J. Kehoe worked in Boston for a few years as a carpenter prior to his death in 1887 at the age of twenty-five. He left a small savings account in the amount of $380.70 at the Boston Five Cents Savings Bank which necessitated administration of his estate in the Suffolk County Probate Court.

James J. Kehoe was the first-born of Andy's seven children. According to the petition for administration of his brother Andrew's estate in 1887, James by that date had moved to Chicago. There the trail appeared to end, for there was no family record or recollection of James' having ever been heard from thereafter. However, through the efforts of a

professional genealogical researcher in Chicago, I eventually succeeded in tracking him down. James worked in Chicago as a laborer, married a woman named Margaret Hogan, and died in 1907 at the age of forty-five. He had no children.

Michael J. Kehoe was remembered by his nieces Alice and Kathryn Kehoe as being a very good-looking man with white skin and a black mustache. When he arrived in Boston from Bunclody in 1883, Michael's occupation was shown on the passenger list as "farm laborer." During the rest of his life Michael worked as a porter at various hotels around Boston, including the Parker House, the Hotel Essex, and the Hotel Touraine. In 1897, he married a widow named Joanna O'Brien who was five years older than Michael and who predeceased him without their having had any children. In his later years Michael lived in Charlestown at 16 Allston Street, just a block away from Will and Julia, which would explain why Alice and Kathryn had such a clear recollection of him. Michael died in 1910 at the age of forty-six. He left two small savings accounts totaling $624.26 which necessitated administration of his estate in the Suffolk County Probate Court.

Gerald P. Kehoe was also known as "Garry." When he arrived in Boston from Bunclody in 1883, Gerald's occupation was shown on the passenger list as "engineer's laborer." During his life in Boston, Gerald lived with his father and

worked variously as a plumber, an engineer, and a baggageman at the South Station. Gerald died unmarried in 1911 at the age of forty-seven.

Luke J. Kehoe was the youngest of Andy's seven children. If James was the "mystery man" among Will's brothers, Luke comes the closest to qualifying as the "skeleton in the family closet." For a number of years Luke worked in Boston as a clerk and lived with his father. According to Alice and Kathryn Kehoe, Luke studied at one time to be a priest in Canada, following which "his health broke down." They also said that Luke had become "something of a religious fanatic." Luke died unmarried in 1931 at the age of sixty. According to his death certificate, Luke died at the Worcester State Hospital, a mental institution, where he had resided for the last eleven years of his life. His sister, Katy Nolan, buried Luke in her Nolan family grave at Holy Cross Cemetery in Malden, but his name does not appear on the headstone.

Neither of Will's two brothers who married, James and Michael, had any children. Will's sister Katy had one child, Mary Nolan, who died unmarried. Thus we have no collateral Kehoe relatives on Will's side of the family in this country today.

Will Kehoe died at the age of sixty-seven on November 30, 1934. His funeral in Somerville was attended by a large delegation of uniformed firemen from the Boston Fire Department.

TO THE HONORABLE THE JUDGES OF THE PROBATE COURT IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX:

RESPECTFULLY represents Kathryn R. Kehoe
of Somerville in said County,
that Julia N. Kehoe
who last dwelt in Somerville in said County of Middlesex,
died on the 17th day of March
in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and ~~thirty~~ forty intestate, possessed
of goods and estate remaining
to be administered, leaving ~~a widow~~ no husband, ~~whose name is~~
, and as h er only heirs-at-law and next of kin the persons whose
names, residences and relationship to the deceased are as follows, viz.:

NAME.	RESIDENCE.	RELATIONSHIP.
Alice T. Kehoe	77 Liberty Ave.W. Somerville,Mass.	daughter
Kathryn R. Kehoe	77 Liberty Ave.W. Somerville,Mass.	daughter
William A. Kehoe	60 Almont St. Medford, Mass.	son
Frederick L. Kehoe	45 Bowman St. Malden, Mass.	son
Arthur T. Kehoe	77 Liberty Ave.W.Somerville,Mass.	son

that your petitioner is a daughter of the deceased.

Wherefore your petitioner prays that s he , or some other suitable person, be appointed administratrix of the estate of said deceased, and certifies that the statements herein contained are true to the best of her knowledge and belief.

Dated this 29th day of August, 1940.

MAILING ADDRESS. SIGNATURE.

77 Liberty Ave.W.Somerville,Mass. Kathryn R Kehoe

Middlesex, ss. Subscribed and sworn to this 29th day of August, 1940.

Before me, Justice of the Peace.

The undersigned, being all the persons interested residing in the Commonwealth who are of full age and legal capacity, hereby assent to the foregoing petition.

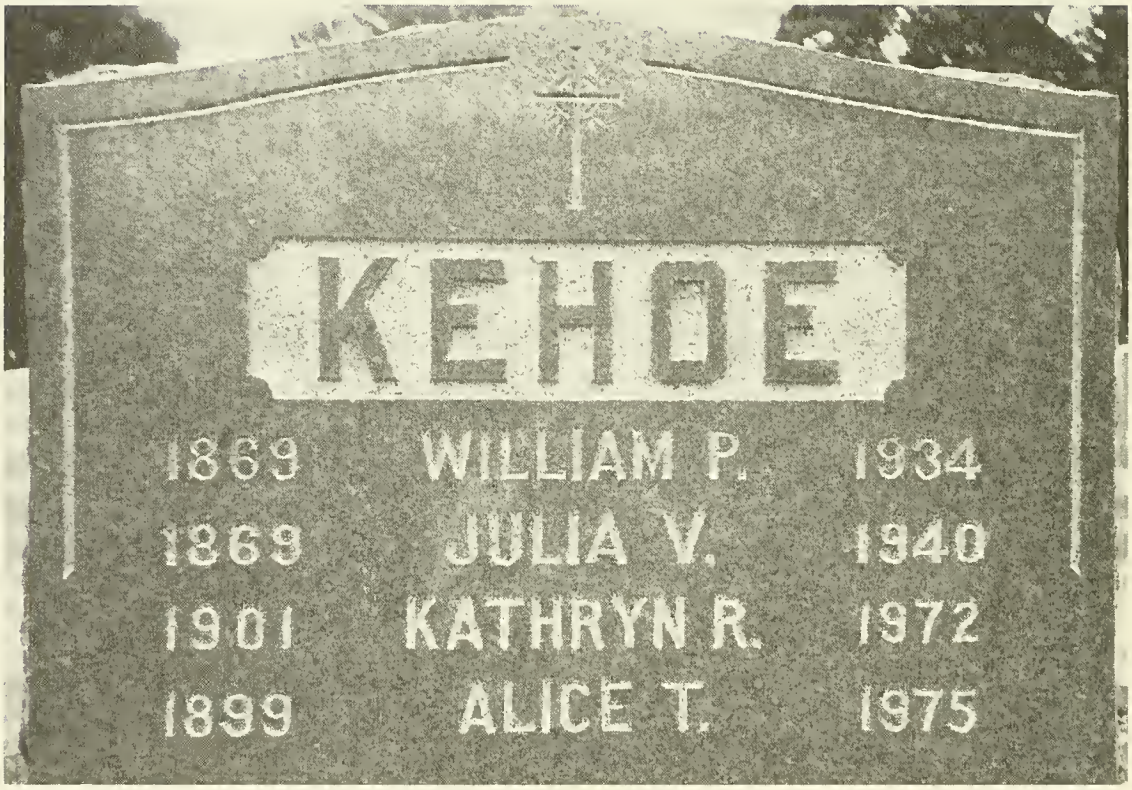
Arthur T. Kehoe
William A Kehoe
Alice T. Kehoe
Kathryn R Kehoe
Frederick L Kehoe

4000—1 39

Petition for administration of Julia's estate, 1940. The signatures of her five children appear at the bottom.

Julia Kehoe died at the age of seventy on March 17, 1940. She was survived by all five of her children.

We have no reason to believe that Julia ever lied about her age; rather, it turns out to be her husband, Will, who engaged in this allegedly feminine form of subterfuge. The record shows that over the years Will discreetly dropped first one year, then a couple of years, off his actual age. When he enlisted in the Navy in 1888, Will correctly gave his year of birth as 1867. But when he joined the Boston Fire Department nine years later, Will made himself a year younger by giving his year of birth as 1868. And when he renewed his Massachusetts driver's license in 1929, Will took a couple of years off his age by giving his year of birth as 1869. This little deception has, literally speaking, been written in stone on Will's cemetery monument, which alleges in perpetuity that Will was two years younger than he really was.



Will and Julia's grave, Oak Grove Cemetery, West Medford, Massachusetts.

Chapter 8

Summing Up

The story of Will and Julia and their families in America spans a period of approximately seventy-five years—from the presidency of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt. It is a story of family transition, from nineteenth century rural Ireland to twentieth century urban America. It is a story of immigration and assimilation during a period of American history which saw millions of the Irish leave their native country to settle in America and become Americans. It is an Irish story but, most of all, it is an American story.

Will and Julia lived from the late 1860s until the late 1930s. Born in the nineteenth century, they lived well into the twentieth. During their lives they witnessed the birth of the modern world as we know it. They saw the invention of the telephone, the electric light, the automobile, the radio,

and the airplane. They lived through the First World War, Prohibition, and the Great Depression. At Julia's death in 1940, the Second World War had already begun and the invention of television, penicillin, radar, computers, and the atomic bomb was just over the horizon.

Like many native-born Americans during the second half of the nineteenth century, Will's and Julia's families made a major transition from the farm to the city. But, as immigrants, they also had to make a second and simultaneous transition to a new country and a new culture. The first generation (Thomas, Johanna, and Andy) were Irish. The second generation (Will and Julia and their siblings) were Irish-American. And the third generation (Will and Julia's children and their cousin Mary Nolan) were American. The first generation settled in the Irish ghetto of Boston's North End. The second generation, Will and Julia and Will's sister Katy Nolan, moved out of the original neighborhood to the Charlestown and Dorchester sections of Boston. And the third generation moved further out into the suburbs. A series of moves at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s left none of the Kehoes living in Boston proper. Alice and Kathryn and Arthur moved with their parents to a flat in Somerville. Upon getting married, Fred settled in Malden and Bill settled in Medford. And Mary Nolan moved with her mother, Aunt Katy,

to Milton, where they bought a single house—the first of the Kehoe family to achieve that distinction. Unlike the predominantly Irish neighborhoods where the Kehoes had lived previously in Boston, places like Somerville, Malden, Medford, and Milton were suburban towns of mixed population with no identifiable "Irish section."

The geographical progression of the Kehoe family—as with immigrant families of many nationalities—directly reflected their increasing prosperity and success as Americans. This achievement could also be seen in the rising educational and vocational level of family members from the first two generations to the third. Thomas and Andy worked at manual laboring jobs, as did Julia's brothers and Will's brothers; Julia and her sister Alice each worked in a factory, while Will became semi-skilled as a plumber and steamfitter. Correspondingly, the members of the first and second generations had only a grade school education. Will and Julia's children, however, all graduated from high school and moved into skilled trades or white collar jobs: Fred and Arthur as electricians, Alice and Kathryn as secretaries, and Bill as a stenographer and travel agent. Their cousin, Mary Nolan, graduated from teacher's college and became a teacher and guidance counsellor in the Boston Public Schools.

The Kehoes' assimilation as Americans could be heard

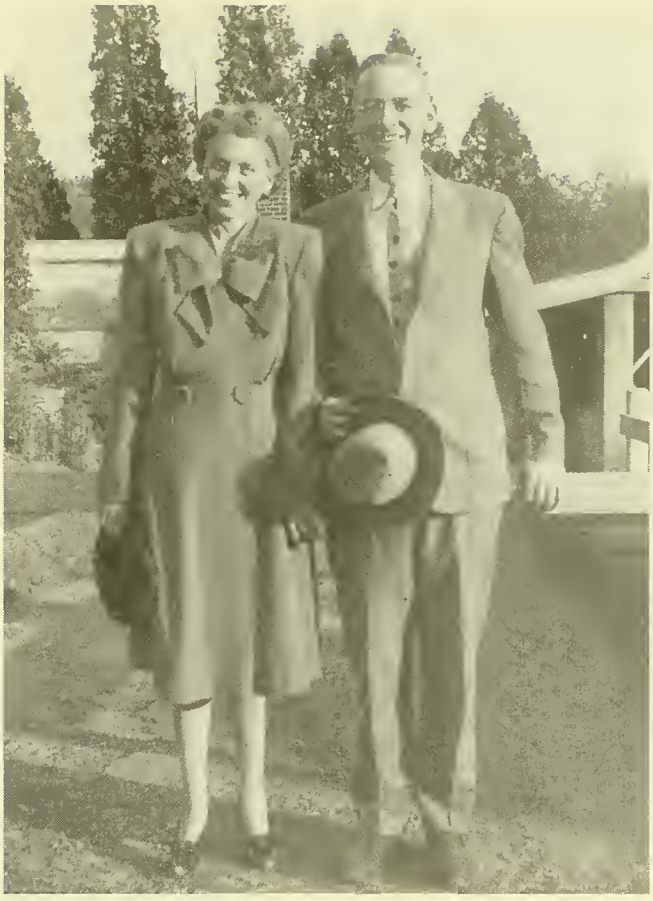
in the way they spoke. Andy and Thomas and Johanna, having come to America as adults, would have spoken with an Irish accent. Will Kehoe, although he lived in Ireland during boyhood, apparently managed to lose his Irish accent after coming to America; those who knew him in his later years have no recollection of Will's speaking with any Irish brogue or accent. Will and Julia's children all spoke pure American English, with a pronounced Boston accent. Not one word did any of them know of Gaelic, the native language that their great-great-grandfather, James Kehoe, had spoken in Drumderry in the late 1700s.

The younger generation of Kehoes, Will and Julia's children, wanted to be up-to-date and American. None of them ever expressed any interest in "the old country" or in what might be happening there. If they referred occasionally to one of the old Irish ways or customs, it was usually in a deprecating vein. Thus Alice and Kathryn spoke of the traditional Irish songs and ballads as "those old come-all-ye's" (from the conventional first line of many Irish ballads "Come all you ..."); they never sang any of the old Irish songs or played them on the piano, preferring instead the American popular songs of the day that were commercially produced by the songwriters of Tin Pan Alley. When she reached high school age, Will and Julia's second daughter, who had been christened "Catherine"

after Will's older sister, modernized the spelling of her name to "Kathryn." To Will and Julia's American children, Ireland was a special place because their father and their grandparents had come from there; other than that, Ireland to them was just another foreign country.

In 1931, the Kehoes crossed a final threshold in their evolution as an Irish-American family. Will and Julia's son Fred married Adeline Caggiano, a young woman of Italian descent. Back in the old days of the North End, the Irish, like other immigrant groups, had stuck with "their own kind" when it came to socializing and, it went without saying, when it came to marrying. Thus Will and Julia and their siblings had all married spouses of Irish descent. It was virtually unthinkable in those days for someone Irish to marry an Italian. Though they were Catholics, the Italians, as more recent immigrants who were taking over the North End, were perceived by the retreating Irish as ethnic adversaries. However, by 1931 both times and people had changed. Nobody disowned Fred (as they very likely would have fifty or sixty years earlier); the entire family took part in the wedding; and everyone welcomed Adeline into the family. To the Kehoes, it was no longer that important to be Irish. They were Americans.

The Kehoe family on the occasion of Fred's wedding on June 17, 1931.
From left to right: Bill, Will, Fred, Arthur.
Kathryn, Julia, Alice.



Bill Kehoe and his wife, Josephine

Fred Kehoe and his wife, Adeline

Dorothy M. Kehoe

Barbara A. Kehoe

Will and Julia's Granddaughters

Lawrence F. Kehoe

William F. Kehoe

Ronald F. Kehoe

Will and Julia's Grandsons

CHART A

ANCESTORS AND SIBLINGS OF WILLIAM P. KEHOE

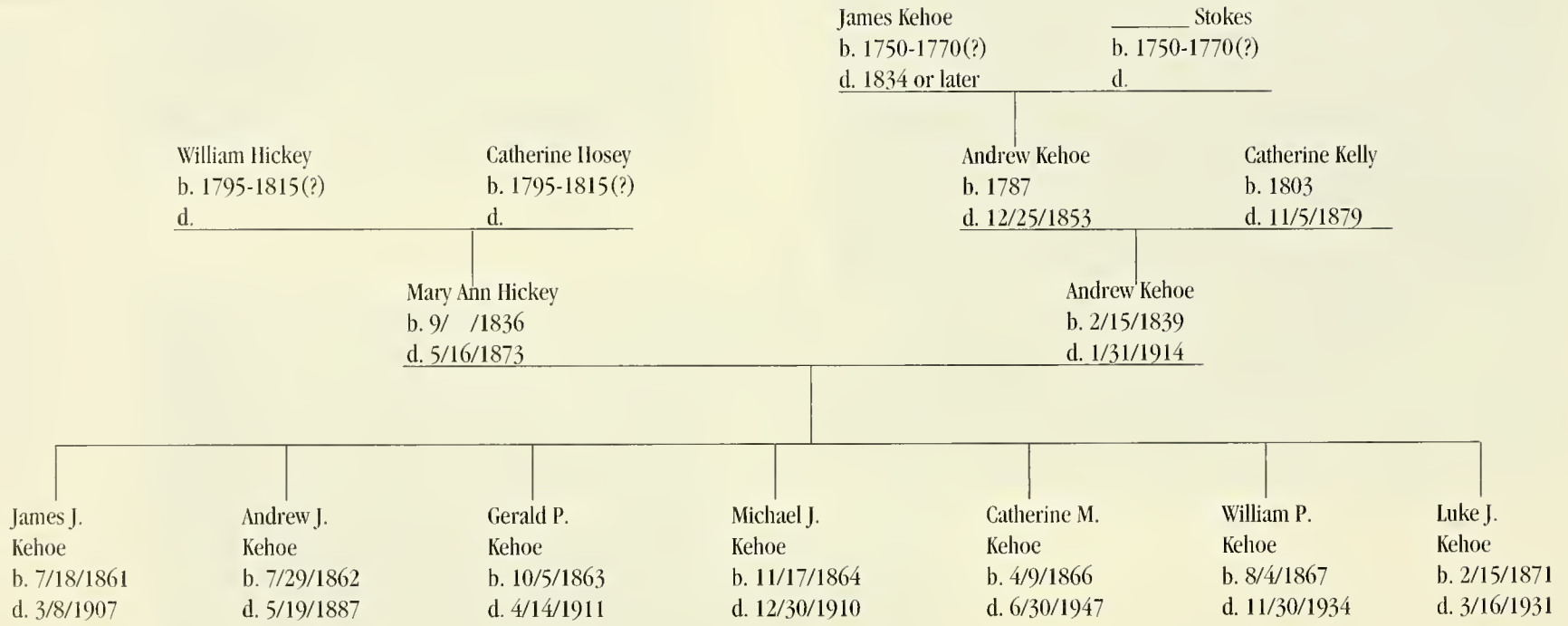


CHART B

ANCESTORS AND SIBLINGS OF JULIA V. KEHOE

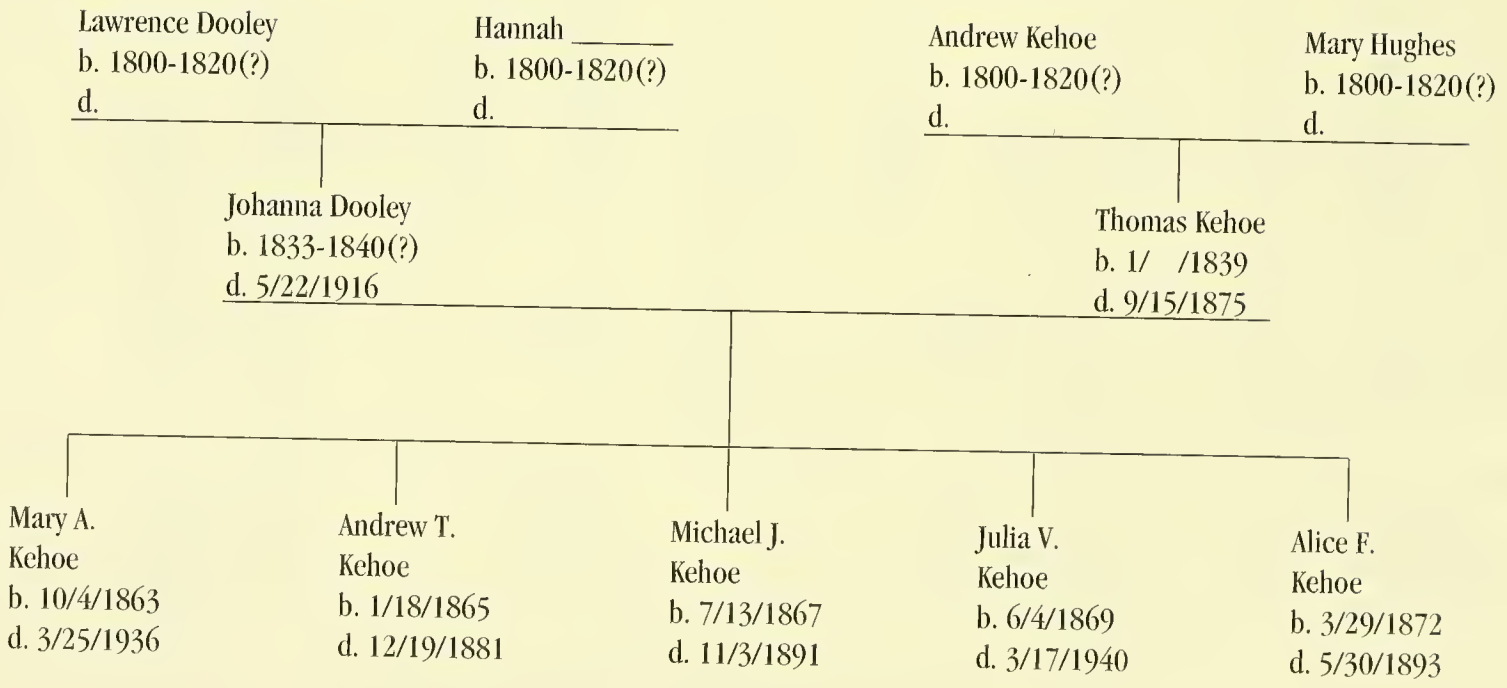
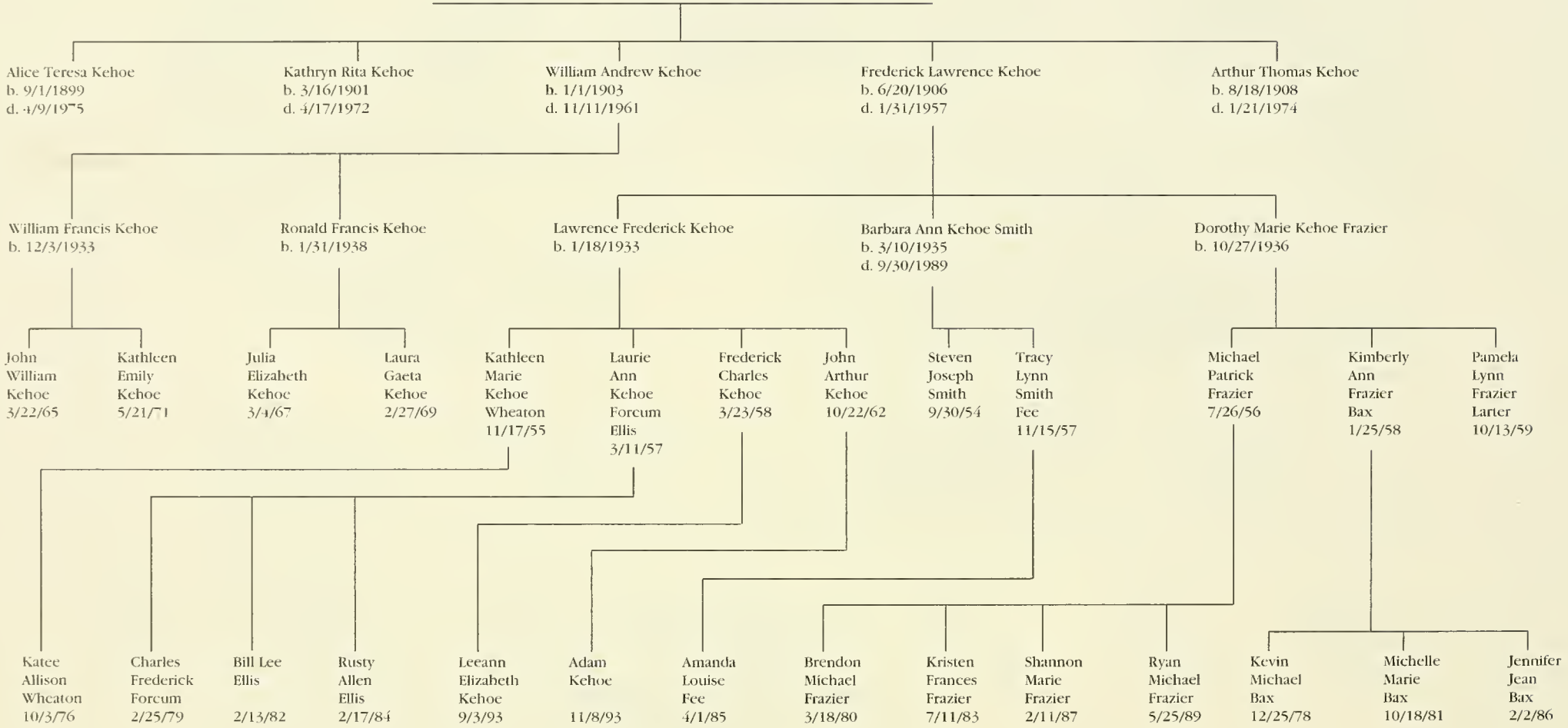


CHART C

Descendants of William Patrick Kehoe and Julia Veronica Kehoe
as of January 1, 1995



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2. St. Brigid's Church, Clonegal, Co. Carlow.
3. St. Mary's Church, North End, Boston.
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About the Author

William F. Kehoe is a Boston lawyer and writer. His interest in Irish history and literature led him to Dublin, where he was a U.S. government Fulbright Scholar at Trinity College in 1959-60. This in turn led him to write a travel book entitled *Enjoying Ireland*, which was published in the United States by the Devin Adair Company in 1966. Since then he has made several return visits to Ireland, including a visit with his daughter Katy, who helped to explore and photograph the area around Bunclody and Kilbranish. Continuing the ancient tradition of the Kehoes as bards, he sings Irish songs and ballads, accompanying himself on the guitar (in lieu of the harp); in the same tradition, he has written a number of songs, one of which, "The Fair of Puck," tells all about the annual Puck Fair at Killorglin, County Kerry.

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